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## Heretics, Saints, and Martyrs

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# HERETICS, SAINTS AND MARTYRS

BY  
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## Preface

**D**URING the last generation a revolution has taken place in the teaching of law. Instead of laying down the principles of the law and giving some illustrations, the professors to-day cite a large number of cases and require their students to gather the law from them. This case-system, as it is called, after being introduced tentatively in one law school and being strongly opposed by others, has now become almost universal.

A similar change may be noted in the teaching of church history. Formerly theology was treated, first, exegetically and dogmatically, and then reference was made to men whose opinions confirmed or opposed the conclusions reached. The development of theologic thought was rarely traced, and a man's place in a system was more emphasized than the man himself. Recently we have come to study with more interest each man's personal history, the development of his thought, its relations to the conditions of his time and to the course of thought of the world. From the contributions of this man and that we may, if we are patient, construct an orderly course of theologic thought.

Something of this case-study may perhaps be found in the following pages. The essays aim to

show one and another line of thought as they were forged in the mind and soul of this thinker and that. They exhibit here no system; but they aim to point out, beneath the little systems which have their day and cease to be, the bond of unity among all their diversities, the bond of a deep soul-breathing consciousness of close fellowship with God. What may be called the humanization of church history results in the revelation in it of this unifying divine element.

The majority of these papers appear here for the first time. "The Anabaptists" was translated into French, and was issued in the "*Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*" in July, 1918. It has never been printed in English. "Angelus Silesius" and "Isaac Watts" were published in "*The Harvard Theological Review*" in April, 1918, and October, 1919, respectively. The last essay, on the different conceptions of Jesus in the New Testament, appeared in "*The American Journal of Theology*" in July, 1919. The others have never been published.



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# Heretics, Saints, and Martyrs





# I

## THE ANABAPTISTS AND THEIR RELATION TO CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

ONE of the valuable accomplishments of manufacturing in recent times has been the discovery of the worth of by-products — substances or results not primarily aimed at, but necessarily appearing in the process of manufacture. The original object of burning coal, for example, was to produce heat. But with combustion there appeared coke, coal-tar, aniline dyes, creosote, paraffin, and other substances. By-products such as these are often found more valuable than the parent product. So in history the apparently subordinate results of a movement often turn out to be those which are the most significant for the world's future. The stone which the builders rejected became the headstone of the corner.

Perhaps one may find an instance of this in the relation of the Anabaptists to the Protestant Reformation; although in this case one might hesitate to assert that the by-product outweighed in value the movement in which it originated. Yet Troeltsch, the church-historian, declared that the elements of Protestantism which constitute its chief value came into the modern world not through the main chan-

nels of the Reformation but through the sects arising from it which he regarded as heretical.<sup>1</sup> The chief of these was that of the Anabaptists.

Many persons, and especially many ecclesiastical institutions, are interested in claiming an ancestry going back — they would be glad to believe — to Adam. The Anabaptists are more modest and more modern in their claims. Like all the other forms of Christianity, they profess to be founded on the model revealed in the New Testament. But their connection with the apostolic age is regarded not so much as a continuous chain, such as the Roman Church boasts, but rather as a revival of conditions intended, indeed, to be permanent, but which were realized only here and there throughout the centuries. During the third and fourth centuries there were persons who declared baptism invalid when performed by a heretic; and, therefore, since “heretic,” when used by one party, meant those of the opposite party, the baptism of the Catholic Church came to be regarded as invalid by those whom it held as unorthodox. But if a child’s baptism was invalid, he was unbaptized. Then he must be brought to baptism — his first genuine baptism, said those who were concerned in it. No, said their opponents, a re-baptism, a second, an anabaptism. Finally the quarrel became noisy enough to be noticed. In 413

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*, tr. by W. Montgomery, p. 122.

the emperors Honorius and Theodosius proclaimed a law forbidding re-baptism on pain of death. Apparently, however, this was not rigid enough; for in 428 another decree was issued prescribing punishment for all who held the baptism of the Catholic State Church to be invalid.

Throughout the Middle Ages here and there the validity of infant baptism was questioned. It was rejected by the Albigenses and the Waldenses, though there seems to be no historic connection between their views in this respect and those of the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century. It was then for the first time that Anabaptism could claim a stable foundation. For the Renaissance of the fifteenth century was the assertion by the individual of his rights. Throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages it was the corporate relations of man that were chiefly regarded. It was the State, the tribe, the Church, the family, that was of importance; the individual had few rights and scant consideration. Individuals here and there had indeed asserted themselves, and made the institutions they originally served, serve them, or, in Scriptural phrase, had "taken captivity captive." But with the majority of men the individual was lost in the institution. In the fifteenth century, however, the generic individual heard the voice of God calling him, and he too, like Abraham and Moses, rose up and answered, "Here am I."

This new consciousness brought man in the southern lands face to face with himself, and set him to asking, "Why should not I be unrestrainedly happy?" In the northern lands it brought him face to face with God, and set him to asking, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" In the southern lands it blossomed in art and learning, in licence and luxury; in the northern lands its chief expression was in religion. The spirit of the Protestant Reformation swept aside all intermediaries between the soul and God. It was "God and I," and nothing between. This sufficiency of the individual to himself in his relation to God was at least what seemed to many the logical outcome of the doctrine of justification by faith; even though Luther himself and Calvin also maintained the alliance of Church and State.

While Luther and his party formed what might be called the Right Wing of the Reformation, there were others who established a Left Wing. Individualism, when growing and sturdy, always demands change in social conditions. In Germany in the fifteenth century fundamental changes in the social condition were needed. The outbreaks of the peasants under the banner of the Bundschuh, which began in 1492 and continued sporadically for nearly a quarter of a century, had been ruthlessly suppressed. But though the flames had been smothered, the embers still smouldered. In 1521 Thomas Münzer, pastor of the church in Zwickau, and Nikolas



Storch, a leader of the weavers in the same place, began to carry to what seemed their logical conclusion the principles of the Reformation. If every individual might directly approach God and hear His voice, then every one who trained himself thus to hear might be a prophet. Münzer and Storch proclaimed themselves prophets, needing the authorization of neither priest nor Bible, for they were themselves inspired. They organized a society, with twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples at its head; and when they came into conflict with the local authorities, as was almost immediately, of course, the case, they scattered and went throughout the country preaching. It was a class-movement, interwoven with the economic and social conditions of the time. For the reforms the need of which they preached were not in religion only. The ecclesiastical and the feudal systems were so closely joined and the oppression of both was so galling, that where rebellion broke out it inevitably became both religious and political. Moreover, Bible-reading in Luther's translation was almost the only reading of the uneducated, and their lack of knowledge of history, with a few fragmentary exceptions, made for them no break between the biblical story and their own times. They felt themselves in the conditions of Moses and Joshua, and Jehovah spoke to them as truly and with the same message as to the heroes of the Old Testament.

The Zwickau prophets took up the grievances of the peasants, and proclaimed a crusade of the sword against all who opposed their gospel. Social revolt and religious fanaticism combined in issuing the following proclamation:

Arise, fight the battle of the Lord! On! on! on! Now is the time. The wicked tremble when they hear of you. Be pitiless! Heed not the groans of the impious! On! on! on! while the fire is burning; on while the hot sword is yet reeking with the blood of the slaughter! Give the fire no time to go out, the sword no time to cool! Kill all the proud ones. While one of them lives, you will not be free from the fear of man. While they reign over you, it is no use to talk of God. Amen. Given at Mühlhausen, 1525. Thomas Münzer, servant of God against the wicked.<sup>1</sup>

A few extracts from the diary of a citizen of Rothenburg may give a glimpse of the events which took place there during the Peasants' War in that grim year 1525:

Mar. 24. — This evening between five and six, the head of the image of Christ is struck off, the arms broken, and the pieces knocked about the churchyard.

Mar. 26. — Sunday — The priest driven from the altar and his mass-book thrown down. The peasants deploy themselves before the Galgen-Thor.

Mar. 28. — 700 peasants assemble and force other peasants to join them.

<sup>1</sup> Frederic Seebohm, *The Era of the Protestant Revolution*, p. 150.

Mar. 31. — The peasants have increased to 2,000. Lorenz Knobloch, having promised to be a captain, has gone out to them. Messengers from the Imperial Council came to make peace, but without result.

Apr. 8. — Good Friday — The service done away. No one sang or read. But Dr. Drechsel preached against emperor, king, princes, and lords spiritual and temporal, for hindering the word of God.

Apr. 10. — Easter Day — Hans Rothfuchs called the sacrament idolatry. No service.

Apr. 14. — Some women run up and down the streets with forks, pikes, and sticks, making an uproar and declaring that they will plunder all priests' houses.

Apr. 28. — Corn given out, but only some take it. Knobloch torn to pieces by the peasants, and they pelted one another with the pieces. The peasants have been heard to say that they would soon see what the Rothenburgers were going to do.

May 1. — In the night they burned the cloister of E., plundered another, and burned the castle of C.

May 15. — Florian Geyer in the parish church proposes articles of alliance among the peasants for 101 years. Demanded that the committee and people should by oath and vow league themselves with the peasants. Which was done, though against the grain to some. Thus to-day Rothenburg has gone over from the Empire to the peasants. A gallows was erected in the market-place in token of this brotherhood and as a terror to evil-doers. About five o'clock tents, wagons, powder are got ready and taken to the camp of the peasants, with intent to storm the castle of Würzburg. 300 peasants who went up on May 9 to storm the castle of Würzburg

were all killed, part by stones, part shot, part slain — taken like birds!

May 27. — 4,000 peasants slain in the valley of the Tauber by the allied powers.

May 29. — 8,000 more peasants slain by the allies. Three messengers are sent from Rothenburg to Markgraf Casimir, carrying a red cross, and fervently begging for mercy. No surrender would be accepted but on "mercy or no mercy." All citizens, clergy and laity, to pay seven florins for Blood and Fire Money, or to be banished thirty miles out of the city. The city to provide some tons of powder.

June 29. — Markgraf Casimir came to Rothenburg with 800 horse, 1000 foot, 200 wagons well equipped with the best artillery, which are placed in the market-place.

June 30. — All citizens called by herald and ordered to assemble in the market-place, and form a circle under guard of soldiers with spears. It was announced that the Rothenburgers had revolted from the Empire and joined the peasants, and had forfeited life, honor, and goods. The Markgraf and many nobles were present. Twelve citizens were called out by name, and beheaded on the spot. Their bodies were left all day in the market-place. Several had fled who otherwise would have been beheaded.

July 1. — Eight more beheaded.<sup>1</sup>

The Peasants' War culminated in 1525, in the battle of Frankenhausen; after which 5000 peasants

<sup>1</sup> Frederic Seebohm, *The Era of the Protestant Revolution*, pp. 146 ff.

lay dead on the field, and Thomas Münzer was captured and beheaded.

This ended the revolution. Luther, writing on June 21, 1525, says:

It is a certain fact that in Franconia 11,000 peasants have been slain. Markgraf Casimir is cruelly severe upon his peasants, who have twice broken faith with him. In the Duchy of Würtemberg 6,000 have been killed; in different places in Swabia, 10,000. It is said that in Alsace the Duke of Lorraine has slain 20,000. Thus everywhere the wretched peasants are cut down.

During the Peasants' War it is estimated that 100,000 persons perished, or twenty times as many as were put to death in Paris in the Reign of Terror in 1793.

Luther was alarmed at the fire which he had kindled, and in spite of his tone of commiseration, he urged the princes to repress the revolt unsparingly. Neither Luther nor Zwingli at first advocated a State Church. But finally Luther said, "There is no way out except through the arm of the government." That arm, which was necessary to the maintenance of the movement he had started, must be used to put down the revolt which threatened to compromise his cause. Reform, he decided, must come through the State; revolt against the civil power must never be countenanced. It was a bitter disappointment to the peasants that Luther, himself a peasant, should have sided, not with them but with

their oppressors, and have driven them on in their work of destruction. His course had another and more far-reaching result. It settled, for the religion which he represented, the policy of union with the State, and left to the despised and persecuted sects which arose in connection with the Reformation the opportunity and the glory of establishing that separation between Church and State, with consequent liberty of conscience within the limits of loyalty, which are the foundation of that freedom in religion so precious to-day.

There was a section of the Left Wing, however, nearer the centre. It differed from the Lutheran position in holding that a State Church was contrary to Scriptural principles. Scripture declared the Church to consist of the elect. But to be of the elect required faith, and faith required an intelligent understanding of the gospel and a deliberate loyalty to it. These were possible only to persons of mature years; therefore the baptism of children was contrary to Scripture, or at least had no warrant in Scripture. This opposition to a State Church was characteristic of all who rejected infant baptism, except the Münsterites, the Batenburgers, and the Davidians. The Left Centre believed that Luther had known how to pull down a house but not how to build a new one. It was mending a pot and making the hole larger. The Reformation was not thorough, but itself needed reform.



On the other hand, this wing differed from the extreme Left in opposing the resort to force. It was at Zürich in 1522 that this party which we have called the Left Centre came into being. The "Brethren," or the "Spirituals," as they were called, would have nothing to do with carnal weapons. Konrad Grebel, their leader, wrote in 1524 to Münzer:

The gospel and its followers shall not be guarded by the sword, neither shall they so guard themselves, as — by what we hear from the Brethren — ye assume and pretend to be right. Truly believing Christians are sheep in the midst of wolves, sheep ready for the slaughter. They must be baptized in fear and in need, in tribulation and death, that they may be tried to the last, and enter the fatherland of eternal peace not with carnal but with spiritual weapons.

Their enemies bear testimony to their uprightness of life. Johannes Hessler, the contemporary Zwinglian chronicler of St. Gall, writes: "Their walk and conversation shone; it was quite pious, holy, and unblamable. They die gladly and valiantly for the name of Christ, although they are tainted with some error." <sup>1</sup> Heinrich Bullinger says: "They led their lives under a semblance of a very spiritual conduct. They reproved earnestly pride, profanity, the lewd conversation and debauchery of the world, drinking, and gluttony." <sup>2</sup> Joachim Vadian says:

<sup>1</sup> *Sabbata, Egli und Schock*, pp. 147, 284.

<sup>2</sup> *Der Wiedertaufer Ursprung*, xv, 10.



"None were at that time more inclined toward Anabaptism and entangled with it than those who were of a pious and upright disposition." <sup>1</sup>

For some months there was no open break between the Brethren and the official party of the Reformation in Zürich, led by Zwingli. But the differences grew and the bitternesses which ecclesiastical and political differences bring. The Brethren insisted on the abolition of tithes and other church dues. The City Council passed a resolution denouncing this attack on the sources of church revenue. The Brethren pressed their doctrine that only the regenerate could be members of the church, and that infants therefore could not properly be baptized. As the numbers of the Brethren increased, the rejection of infant baptism came to be more and more the dividing line between the two parties. The refusal of parents to allow their children to be christened was met by an edict making infant baptism compulsory, and a little later by another edict banishing those who refused. This crystallized the situation. Georg Blaurock, who had been a priest, called upon Grebel to proclaim adult baptism as a duty for all Brethren and, in furtherance of the plan, to baptize him. This Grebel did, and Blaurock then administered baptism to all present. All of the regenerate might and should be baptized and all such were entitled to baptize others. This, which took place on

<sup>1</sup> *Deutsche historische Schriften*, ii, 408.

January 21, 1525, marks the definite beginning of the Anabaptist movement; for adult baptism was not the characteristic feature of Münster's movement, though the two had common roots, and the later Anabaptists, who descended from the Zürich school, repudiated connection with him.

After the defeat of Münster's party at Frankenhäusen in 1525, the working classes saw the impossibility of reform through insurrection, and turned eagerly to the Anabaptists with their programme of non-revolutionary reform. Even this programme was feared by the authorities, and the Anabaptists were pursued with banishment, fines, imprisonment, torture, and in 1528 by a decree of the Empire condemning them to death. Yet in spite of this, martyrdom, as so often, proved a good advertisement, and in these years the Anabaptist movement far exceeded the Lutheran and Zwinglian movements in intensity and strength. But its new adherents carried over into it the economic and social aims which had been overthrown at Frankenhäusen, and it came to have more and more the political and revolutionary tone which had characterized the party of the Zwickau prophets.

Together with this the extreme individualism, which was the basis of Anabaptism, began to show more openly and widely its logical fruits in the defiance of law and morals. Much of our knowledge of the Anabaptists of these years comes from hostile

sources, and allowance must therefore be made in receiving the evidence. These opposing critics would undoubtedly magnify excesses and defects. But with all due allowance for bias in the chroniclers, there is sufficient trustworthy evidence of the extremes to which many of the Anabaptists went. Bullinger declares that a sect among them, called "The Holy and Sinless Baptists," maintained that the elect cannot sin. Whatever the baptized believer might do therefore, if it involved what otherwise would be sin, in him it would be no sin, since it concerned his body only and did not proceed from or touch his soul. They consequently omitted from the Lord's Prayer the words "Forgive us our trespasses." Another sect, "The Silent Brothers," did not believe in preaching, but held, like the Quakers of a century later, that formal preaching should be abolished, since the Apostle Paul had said, "There is a time to be silent." Among the "Ecstatic Brothers" visions, dreams, revelations, were common and were regarded as having authority. These naturally passed into religious epidemics. Women would rush into the public meetings without their clothes, and only after some time become conscious that they were naked. Thomas Schugger declared that it was the will of the Lord, revealed to him, a prophet, that he should bind his brother Leonhardt, which was done. Leonhardt, who seems to have had a prophetic spirit of his own, submissive yet more advanced, then pro-

claimed that it was the will of the Lord that his head should be cut off by Thomas. After meditating over night, Thomas proceeded to give this proof of fraternal affection and to cut off his brother's head; for which he was himself beheaded a week later. In Appenzell the command of Christ to his disciples to become as little children was joyously and literally carried out. Many persons, male and female, would act like young children — throwing apples at each other, having their faces washed, sitting naked on the ground, jumping up and down, clapping their hands. Others fastened on a different text of Scripture — "The letter killeth" — and therefore threw their Bibles into the fire. Such excesses have appeared in all times, wherever unbridled religious enthusiasm has based itself on a conviction of the final authority of the Scripture and a literal interpretation of it.

On the other hand, there is evidence of the peaceable and upright, if narrow, life of the members of these communities. A member on joining vowed to live according to the will of Christ, to forsake the ways of the world, to hold his property as a trust for all his fellow members, who were to be regarded as his brothers and sisters, and to give to the poor all that was not necessary for his own living. Kessler, a hostile critic, who recorded his impressions of those at St.Gall, says:

Because they are themselves unlearned, they despise all learning, proclaiming that revelation and the inner light come only to the simple and ignorant. Their walk and conversation are throughout pious, holy, and blameless. They carry no weapon, neither sword nor dagger, save it be a broken bread-knife, declaring that the sheep durst not wear the wolf's clothing. They swear not; nay, not even take the civic oath to any authority; and should one of them transgress in this, he will be banished by them, for there is a daily purging of members among them. In speech and disputation they are grim and bitter, and are withal so stubborn that they are willing to die for that which they maintain. They proclaim more insistently justification by works than even the Papists.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the Anabaptist communities previously described were in Switzerland and southern Germany. They had always refused to countenance having recourse to the sword, and the disaster of 1525 taught them more clearly than ever to abstain from attempts at political reform. Their tone was religious and theological. But about 1530 a new and powerful influence came into the movement in western and northern Germany, which changed its pacific character. A belief that the coming of Christ and the end of the world were near had been held here and there, but it became prominent in the ardent preaching of Melchior Hoffmann in Strasbourg in 1529. At first, he confined himself to depicting vividly the conditions in the last days and

<sup>1</sup> *Sabbata*, iii, 232.

the reign of the saints which would then begin, but he did not advocate the adoption of active measures for hastening the time. Before long, however, he abandoned the doctrine of passive waiting and proclaimed the right of the elect to use the sword against the godless principalities and powers of the world. In the following two years the Melchiorites spread rapidly through the valley of the Rhine and the Netherlands.

Hoffmann declared that Strasburg was to be the New Jerusalem, where the Lord would appear, and from which the saints would march forth to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth. The date of the appearance would be the year 1533. His exciting preaching had such influence in Strasburg and drew to the city such eager crowds from the lower Rhine, that he was imprisoned by the authorities, who took also strong measures to convince his expectant disciples that any outbreak would be severely repressed. The prudent opinion, therefore, began to spread among the Brethren that because of its hardness and unbelief the Lord had rejected Strasburg from the honor of becoming the New Jerusalem, and another starting-point must be found. This opinion had substantial basis in the fact that the city authorities held Hoffmann in prison, where, in fact, he died ten years later. But as the torch dropped from his hand, it was raised and brandished by Jan Matthys, a baker of Haarlem. The missionaries of



the Melchiorite doctrines had had marked success in Holland, and Matthys not only took up and preached their gospel with fiery zeal, but added to it the demand for immediate action. There was no need to wait; the time was at hand. The remembrance of the disasters of the Peasants' War had lost somewhat of its vividness, but the seething passions and determined aims which gave rise to the war had lost none of their vitality. Moreover, in the Netherlands these disasters had been felt comparatively little, so that men there were prepared to renew the old struggle undeterred by bitter experience. It was from the Netherlands, therefore, that the new impetus came. But it did not come until the conditions were prepared for it in Germany. The clock had struck wrong, but Matthys was to try the experiment whether moving it into another room would not set it right without altering the works.

Münster was an important city in the German province of Westphalia; and here in 1529 Bernhardt Rothmann, a young priest, began preaching the doctrines of the Reformation, at first as a reformer within the Church. After two years, however, he decided to join the Lutheran party, and he endeavored to persuade his friends in the City Council to align the city definitely with the so-called Evangelicals. He succeeded so far as to gather a party large enough to defy the conservatives and to prevent his arrest. This division in the city made the

issue a political one. A further disturbing factor was furnished by an epidemic of pestilence which had recently swept the district, and by excessively high prices for food. All the elements were present — religious, political, social — which had appeared in the revolutionary movements elsewhere, and in 1533 Münster was formally declared an Evangelical town. A struggle then began with the Prince-Bishop, in whose jurisdiction the city was. And it was at this time that the impetus from outside came, which constituted a crisis in the fortunes of Anabaptism and made Münster famous in its history.

The Brethren at Strasburg, as has been said, had been coming to the conviction that the New Jerusalem must be found elsewhere; and hearing of Münster's zeal for the Lord, they began turning their eyes to it in hopes that this might be the capital of the new kingdom. Many others were attracted from the awakened communities in the Netherlands; and among them two of the Apostles of Jan Matthys came to Münster, proclaiming that God had sent a new prophet into the world to herald the end of all things and the beginning of the millennium, and that he would soon set up his and God's kingdom at Münster. As all were eager to have part in the kingdom but as this was possible for those only who had been baptized properly, that is, in adult maturity, the whole population, magistrates and citizens, clergy and laity, men and women, became wild



with religious excitement and zeal for baptism. While the enthusiasm was at its height, Jan Bockelson, or John of Leyden, and another missionary arrived. Bockelson was twenty-five years old, handsome, eloquent, masterful, and it was not long before all the women of Münster were devoted to him and he became the leader in the town. He modestly denied that he was the prophet whose coming had been predicted, but he had been sent, a John the Baptist, to prepare the way. He put many members of the working-classes into positions of prominence, and established a common fund for property, which was supplied at first by voluntary contributions, though afterward by requisition. But the wheels of the millennium did not run altogether smoothly. Fastening the weather-vane due south does not keep off northerly storms. There were members of the Town Council who were not prepared to adopt fully the new régime, to declare Münster an independent Jerusalem, and to cut themselves off from that Empire in which all their days had been spent. They appealed to the Bishop to exercise his authority; but instead of sending troops, which, as he was a mediæval and not a modern bishop, was quite within his power, he issued a proclamation to see whether barking would not take the place of biting.

For a fortnight no direct outbreak occurred. Then on February 9, 1534, in the early morning, a

band of Anabaptist soldiers seized the centre of the town. The conservatives soon gathered their forces and made a stand, Evangelicals and Catholics together, the old Empire against the new kingdom. They sent another message to the Bishop, urging his immediate aid. This he promised, on condition that two of the town gates should be left free to him after the suppression of the disorder. By this time, however, the Evangelicals began to foresee that if the Bishop's troops came and with their aid suppressed the Anabaptists, the next step would be that they themselves and the cause of the Reformation would be suppressed. After some street skirmishing, therefore, a truce between the contending parties in the city was arranged, and when the Bishop and his troops arrived outside the walls, they found the gates closed against them. The truce, however, meant that the Anabaptist party were gaining the upper hand; and by their direction Rothmann, who had inaugurated the movement in Münster five years before, sent the following letter throughout Westphalia and the Netherlands:

Bernhardt Rothmann, the servant of the Heavenly Father, to all his brethren who dwell among the heathen, health and divine blessing! Be it known to you all that the Heavenly Father hath sent unto us certain prophets, who proclaim the pure word of God with most marvellous gift of tongue and in the spirit of everlasting salvation. He who seeketh his everlasting salvation, let him forsake

all worldly goods, and let him with wife and with children come unto us here to the New Jerusalem, to Zion, to the Temple of Solomon! Besides the treasure in heaven, it shall be requited to him tenfold in money and in goods for that which he hath left behind him!<sup>1</sup>

This letter had its desired result with the people for whom it was intended. Dissatisfied tradesmen, unsuccessful farmers, pious visionaries, fugitive monks, social reformers, political adventurers — a multitude came, filling the dusty roads to Münster, alone or with carts loaded with household goods. Purpose had its fulfilment, as in the migration of Abram and his family: "They went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came." Many were sincere enthusiasts, confident that they had found the pearl of great price, while others were selfish schemers, scrambling for the oyster which contained it to eat. But the most important arrival was that of the promised prophet, Jan Matthys, with his beautiful wife, who had been a nun in Haarlem. In a few days he summoned the people to the market-place, where, producing like Moses two tablets of stone, he announced that the Lord of Hosts had commissioned himself and John of Leyden to teach the people the pure word and service of God, and he assured them that against the city of the Saints the powers of this world could not prevail. "Almighty be our doctrine and our power,"

<sup>1</sup> E. Belfort Bax, *The Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists*, p. 153.

he exclaimed, "and praised be the will of our Father, who has sent us here to found the New Jerusalem, the city of Regeneration, the thousand years' Kingdom, according unto His Holy pleasure!"

One who should make such an announcement to-day would discredit himself by the very announcement. But suppose a situation in which religious interests took the place which politics has with us; suppose the social unrest as great as in Russia; remember that the lack of ready communication with the outside world would create such a lack of the sense of proportion that local affairs would seem the important centre of the universe; remember, too, that the majority of the inhabitants of Münster at this time were without regular occupation, drawn thither in the expectation of supernatural manifestations and social upheaval — and it will not seem altogether strange that they should lend themselves readily to the first leader who could play upon the instrument so fully tuned. Moreover, underneath these local conditions there was a definite platform of convictions held by many throughout Europe who had been stirred by the principles of the Reformation. These convictions were, the right of private judgment as opposed to authority in religion, with the possibility of special divine revelation to every individual; the equality of all Christians, their duty consequently to hold all things in common, and the abolition of priestly mediators; the near approach

of the end of the world, with the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. It was a presumption that these views were true, that they were for the most part not held by the rich and learned; for had not the kingdom been promised to the poor and lowly, and was not the Saviour of the world a carpenter and a convict? The last article of this creed, however, was not held by the Anabaptists of southern Germany; but in the northwest it was the tinder ready to take fire when the spark should be struck. From the belief that the day of vengeance was near at hand, it was but a step to the confidence that the glorious day could be hastened by the active assistance of the elect.

Our contemporary accounts of the Anabaptists were, as I have said, all written by their enemies, and hostile prejudice undoubtedly colored the accounts; such, for example, as the report made to Bishop Franz von Waldeck, that "so soon as the town [Münster] had come into their power, they did utterly overthrow all divine Christian order and justice, all spiritual and temporal rule and policy, and did set up a bestial life." In the city there were undoubtedly, as in any such promiscuous assemblage, instances of ignorance, foolishness, lust, cruelty, crime. But there can be little question that the majority of the people were upright, sincere in belief, and, according to their lights, lofty of aim. It was a pitiful attempt to realize a noble ideal. Like

the builders of the Tower of Babel, they attempted to bridge earth and heaven with earthly materials. The system against which they revolted was far worse than that by which they attempted to replace it.

The Holy City of Zion was now definitely established in Münster. Another reign of the saints had begun. But the forces of the Bishop outside were besieging the town, and within there were doubters and traitors and spies. It was necessary to sift out the godless. Early on a bitter February morning armed bands of Anabaptists went through the city, arousing all the inhabitants, separating the faithful, that is, those who had received adult baptism, from the heathen, that is, the unbaptized, and giving the latter the choice of immediate baptism or of being driven from the city. Conscience was not all on one side; for a large number of men, women, and children preferred facing the winter and the Bishop rather than submitting to a ceremony which was in their eyes, at the least, meaningless. Of those who remained three hundred were baptized that day, and the same process of sanctification was continued for two days more.

A scheme of communism was now proclaimed — not a complete community of all goods but only of money. Rothmann declared: "A Christian durst have no money, be it silver or gold. All that Christian brethren or sisters have belongs to the one as



much as to the other. The brethren shall possess no other thing but their food, clothes, house, and home. It is mine as well as thine, and thine as well as mine." While the community thus claimed the right over all property, though it was money alone which was wholly confiscated, public officers decided how much food and clothing each property-owner must contribute for the support of the poorer citizens, and allowed him to retain the rest until it should be needed. A common free table was established in each of the wards of the city, where all might eat.

Obedience to the inner revelation was the fundamental loyalty of the Anabaptists, and Jan Matthys was, like St. Paul, not disobedient to what he regarded as the heavenly vision. One day, in the midst of a dinner which he was giving to his friends, his manner suddenly changed. He seemed absorbed and listening to an inward voice. Then he threw up his hands, rose from the table, and exclaimed, "Oh dear Father, not as I will but as thou wilt!" He proceeded to kiss each guest, bade them farewell with "God's peace be with you all!" and left the room. The next day he took about twenty companions with him, and the little band passed through the gate and proceeded to attack the whole of the Bishop's army. The forlorn hope was at once, of course, cut to pieces. Matthys's body especially was hacked to bits, and the Bishop's men then called over the walls to the Anabaptists and invited them

to come and get their leader. The view held by hostile critics that Matthys was a selfish demagogue, seeking position and power for personal ends, is disproved by the useless sacrifice of his heroic death.

Jan Bockelson — John of Leyden — now succeeded to the position of leader; and as John Robinson said of a very different adventurer nearly a century later, "If any man brought oars, he brought sails." He began at once to make his position more absolute by abolishing the City Council and taking all power into his own hands. He encouraged the religious fanaticism which manifested itself in wild dances through the streets by the women, and in hunts for the godless by mobs with swords drawn and shouts of "Father, Father, give us light!" He established a policy which has been, on the one hand, denounced as unchecked licentiousness, and, on the other hand, defended as justifiable. By the edict which his cabinet issued, all existing marriages were dissolved; every adult man and woman must be married; polygamy was established; the choice of a husband was left to the woman, and the original wives might choose their former husbands on condition that they should embrace the new-comers with "Welcome, dear Christian sister!" That the new order of things did not aim to abolish all orderly relations between the sexes is shown by the fact that choice was put into the hands of the women, and also by the passage of a severe edict against



adultery. However mixed the motives for the step may have been, there were some which were rational. The women in Münster at the time of the siege outnumbered the men by some three to one. Under the feudal system, which was just breaking up, it was not safe for a woman to be without a protector, and especially was this the case in troublous times. If the Kingdom of the Saints was to be established permanently and to extend, the population of its capital city must be kept up, not merely by doubtful additions of the godless from the world without but by the increase of the godly within. Moreover, did not the Bible declare that polygamy was the divinely ordered form of marriage in that society which the saints were to take as their model? In spite of these excellent arguments for the new order of things, it did not work altogether smoothly. The dear Christian sisters who had been welcomed sometimes made trouble; so that many quarrelsome women who persisted in saying, "It was her fault!" had to be sent to reflect in prison, and the authorities had to recognize that even to the saints divorce must on such occasions be permitted.

Bockelson, of course, made haste to adjust himself to the new order of things. He took three wives, one of whom, Divara, the beautiful widow of Matthys, he proclaimed queen, and ordered the others to obey her. Position and power to one of light head are like salt water: the more he drinks of them,

the thirstier he becomes. The scenic and dramatic instincts were strong in Bockelson, and he well understood the value of splendor in securing deference and establishing authority. Whenever he appeared in public, he was gorgeously dressed in silk and velvet, surrounded by a numerous body-guard, on his head a crown of gold glittering with jewels, a jewelled sceptre in his hand, and around his neck a heavy gold chain, which, with other mementos of a widely different kind, is still preserved in Münster. He himself, so he announced, was wholly unworthy of all this magnificence; it was befitting and necessary to him only as the representative of the Most High. It was but a suggestive foretaste of that soon coming day when the tables and chairs at the feasts of all the saints should be of silver, and gold should be of no more account than the stones of the streets.

These representations were accepted by the majority of the people, and they continued to give him their steadfast support throughout the siege. There were, it is true, as is always the case, plots against him; but his hold on the people enabled him to defeat them. On one occasion, for example, he proclaimed throughout the city that the joyful hour had arrived when they all should go out, led by himself, their king, to possess the Promised Land. After some ten thousand persons had gathered in the city square, Jan appeared with his splendid reti-

nue, and announced that he had only wished to test them, for the hour had not yet come; but he invited them all to be his guests at a feast. Benches and tables, food and drink, were brought out, and he with his courtiers and their ladies themselves served. At the close, Jan stood up and declared that God had relieved him of his dignity as king, and he would now abdicate. Whereupon one of the prophets arose and proclaimed that it had been revealed to him by God that this intention of their dear brother, however praiseworthy, should not be carried out, but that he should remain king; to which the people shouted a unanimous assent. Jan's position was therefore strengthened by this plebiscite.

It is interesting to notice that here, as elsewhere in war-time, the necessity for recreation was strongly felt. The passion for pageants was keen in the Middle Ages, and Jan took care that the people should be kept amused, to distract them from the fighting, the fortifying, the hunger, the quarrelling, and all the miseries which the siege was pressing upon them. But pageants and plays could not feed the city, and that was now becoming a daily problem. For this they were of no more value than a poultice to a wooden leg. All private stores of food were seized and all the animals killed, but still famine drew nearer and nearer. The announcement was then made that for four days all who wished to leave the town could do so, but that any caught departing

after that time would be put to death as traitors. Large numbers preferred to take their chances with the Bishop's army rather than face starvation in the city. Of those who went many were put to death by the Bishop's troops. The remainder he tried to drive back into the city; and when they refused to stir for this purpose, and most of the men had been killed, those who were left were scattered in groups in different towns throughout the province. Their fate, however, did not deter others from escaping. Bockelson had availed himself of his royal privilege, and by this time — April, 1535 — he had fifteen wives. Fourteen of these, together with large numbers of other women and almost all the children, left the city, probably by the connivance of the authorities, in spite of the severe edict against desertions; for dogs, cats, rats, and mice had been eaten, and there are hints of cannibalism having occurred. Gresbeck, however, who was in the town throughout the siege and who became the hostile-minded chronicler of it, says in his "*Geschichtsquellen des Bisthums Münster*," that of this he found no evidence.

This man Gresbeck had been prominent in the affairs of Münster; but he decided to quit the ship, now that it was plainly sinking. On May 24, 1535, he with five others climbed the wall; and when they were taken by the Bishop's soldiers, they told of the straits to which the city was reduced, described the

weak places in the defences, proposed a plan for an advantageous attack, and offered, for a sum of money, to lead the besiegers into the city. The offer was accepted; and on the night of June 24 Gresbeck and one of his companions, Hans von der Langen Straten, led a band of the Bishop's men to where the moat was shallow and the garrison was weak. Their scaling-ladders were undetected until the attacking party were on the wall and in the streets. Then ensued fierce fighting from street to street and house to house. John of Leyden's palace was entered just as he escaped from it. His wife, however, was captured and compelled to give up the keys to the city gates, which were opened and through which the whole of the Bishop's forces streamed into the doomed city. Still the fight went on, one little band of the Anabaptists after another being cut to pieces, until at last, by noon of June 25, 1535, resistance had ceased. The slaughter, however, did not cease.) The town was given over to the soldiery for plunder and destruction. Men and women were thrown from windows to be caught on spears below. The streets and houses were filled with the dead. Those who escaped the massacre by being taken prisoners went to death, most of them, with a little more formality after being sentenced to execution. Among these was John of Leyden's "queen," the beautiful Divara, who refused to renounce her Anabaptist faith and who was beheaded in front of the Cathedral.

Bockelson himself, after his escape from the palace, hid in one of the gate-towers. But the feeling which prompts a boy to show himself of importance through possessing valuable knowledge led such a boy to betray the hiding-place to the searching soldiers. Jan endeavored to keep them at a distance by commanding them not to lay hands on the Lord's anointed. But they rushed upon him with shouts of "Straw king, if thou hast any power, save thyself from us!" On being brought before the Bishop, the latter asked him in derision, with perhaps the thought of a greater trial in mind, "Art thou a king?" To which John of Leyden replied, "Art thou a bishop?" And when asked by what right he had usurped power over Münster, he again boldly returned the question, "Who hath given thee right and power over the city of Münster?" The Bishop replied that he had been elected by the Cathedral Chapter and confirmed by the Emperor and the Pope; to which John answered, "And I have been called to the leadership by God and his prophets." When he was reproached with the sufferings and losses he had caused, he said that, rather than surrender, he would have held out till everyone in the city had starved to death, and that, if the Bishop wished to recoup himself for his expenses, he could put him, Jan, in a cage and exhibit him at a gulden a head, for the Bishop could pay all the cost of the war and his private debts besides from those who



would be eager to see the King of Zion. "Good!" said the Bishop; "I will shut thee up in a cage indeed, but otherwise than thou hopest."

Two others of the Anabaptist leaders, Bernhardt Knipperdollinck and Bernhardt Krechting, had been captured at the fall of the city, and they, together with Jan Bockelson, were put each into an iron cage, carried through the towns and villages of the duchy, and exposed to the insults of the multitudes who thronged to see them. After being exhibited and imprisoned for six months, they were taken back to the city where Jan had reigned magnificent and absolute in power, and there in the market-place their flesh was tortured with hot pincers, their tongues were torn out, and they were finally stabbed to death. Their bodies were then put back into the cages in which they had been exhibited, and these ghastly memorials were hung high on the tower of the Church of St. Lamberti in Münster. There they hung undisturbed, except by wind and storm, for three centuries and a half. When the town was rebuilt about thirty years ago, they were taken down and then again replaced.<sup>1</sup> They were hanging there when the World War broke out. Whether these memorials of barbarous treatment of conquered enemies are there still, I do not know. Perhaps the same aim at frightfulness which led to the destruction of Rheims Cathedral would

<sup>1</sup> Georg Tumbült, *Die Wiedertäufer*, p. 93.

lead to the preservation of the grim pendants of the Lambertikirche.

The fall of Münster was the destruction of the militant type of Anabaptism, though one or two fruitless attempts to revive it were made here and there. From the first there had been in the movement, as has been said, two different tendencies — the one theological and ascetic, emphasizing adult baptism as the key to Christian character, the separation of Church and State, and the refusal to resort to force; the other largely political and economic, aiming at the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth, and not hesitating to use violence in establishing it. But they that took the sword perished by the sword; and it now remained to be seen whether they had involved their more peaceful brethren in their fall. The destruction of the militant element at Münster, however, gave those who disapproved of the use of force an opportunity to regain the footing they had lost. They were wise enough to see that their existence depended upon dissociating themselves as far as possible from the Münsterites. They heard the voice of the Lord saying to them, as He had said to Isaiah, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

From this time Anabaptism ceased to aim at a social revolution and became more distinctively a religious movement. Its adherents, however, could



not outgrow the odium brought upon their name by their Münsterite brethren. For more than a century among the circles of established order and government throughout Europe the name "Anabaptist" was equivalent to "Bolshevik" in our time, connoting dangerous socialistic and revolutionary tendencies. The movement is frequently regarded as a continuation or outbreak of the Peasants' War, which ended in 1525. Economic conditions were the fundamental cause of both. But the latter was mainly a revolt of the country's serfs against the feudal system, while the former was a town movement, in which tradesmen were the chief and peasantry who sympathized with their aims were a subordinate element. In both a prominent part was taken by the preacher or prophet, who gave theological form to the profoundly religious convictions held by many, probably by most of those in both movements.

The wildest tempest cannot blow out the stars; and after the fall of Münster the conservative elements which existed in Germany and the Netherlands gradually took courage and came together in Friesland under the leadership of Menno Simons. He systematized the doctrines of the Anabaptists and exhibited them as centering around the question of infant baptism. This to him was the vital point of division from his opponents, as circumcision was to St. Paul. In every country at that time Church

and State were united, and all individuals, except Jews, were compelled by law to become members of the State Church by baptism in infancy. The result was that church membership had no relation to personal belief, piety, uprightness. The very criminals in the prisons were church members in good standing, for excommunication, except for condemned heretics, was almost unknown. Questions then arose: Should church membership mean nothing but birth? Should not those alone be recognized as church members who credibly professed belief in Christ and accepted him as their Master? Should the Church be identical with the world, or separate from it? Should it be implicated in the State's use of the sword, or should it confine itself to the sword of the Spirit? Should the final authority in religion be the magistrate or the Bible? Is belief to be prescribed, or must there be liberty for the individual conscience? Is the Church essentially a hierarchy, or a body of believers? Away with the Mass, and with all ritual, worship, and doctrine which cannot be established on the authority of Scripture! And in Scripture it is not the pre-Christian Old Testament that is to be the standard, but the Christian New Testament; otherwise Judaism, heathenism, worldliness will pervade the Church. "As long as they baptize unconscious infants," said Menno,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Netherlands it was customary for a son to take his father's name, with the addition "zoon." This name in common usage was

“esteem all whom they have baptized as Christians, dispense the holy bread to the impenitent, and admit all the avaricious, extortioners, pompous, intemperate, and the like to the fellowship of their Church, the world will continue to be their Church and their Church the world.<sup>1</sup>” In the opinion of these Menonites the Jews spoke more truly than they knew when they said of the Temple, which should have been composed of living members of Christ, “See what manner of stones are here!”

Menno was insistent on his wide difference from the Münsterites:

We are clear and free of the abominable doctrine, uproar, mutiny, blood-thirstiness, polygamy, and like abomination of the false prophets. Yea, we hate and oppose such teachings with all earnestness as evident heresy, as snares to the conscience, as deception, seduction, and fraud, and as pestilential doctrines accursed and rejected by all Scripture. . . . Behold, kind reader, this is my position and confession concerning the Münsterites, and the position of all who are acknowledged and accepted as brethren and sisters among us. . . . We acknowledge that some of the false prophets were to outward appearance baptized with the same manner of baptism as we, just as also thieves, murderers, highway robbers, sorcerers, and the like are baptized with you.

generally dropped. Menno Simons or Simonszoon is therefore always referred to by his first, his proper name.

<sup>1</sup> Complete works of Menno Simons (Elkhart, Indiana, U.S.A., 1871), ii, 70.

Shall the good angels be unjustly judged for the sake of Lucifer's pride, and be meted out his punishment? Or are all the apostles traitors for Judas' sake? Were the apostles responsible for it that the Nicolaitans had their wives in common, as Eusebius relates? . . . If we then are Münsterites for no other reason than because of baptism, then they [our opponents] must be perjurers, murderers, highwaymen, thieves, and rogues, for these have received one baptism in common with them. This cannot be gainsaid or denied. Oh, no; the Scriptures do not teach that we are baptized into one body by any outward sign, such as water, but that we are baptized into one body by one Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Under Menno's leadership Anabaptism acquired cohesion and gained a footing. In 1546 he settled near Oldesloe in Holstein on the estate of Bartholomew von Ahlefeld, a nobleman who had witnessed the persecution and martyrdom of the Anabaptists in the Netherlands and, while not himself joining them, had become convinced that they were a peaceful and useful people. Menno's influence extended into Holland; and after his death in 1559, this country became the centre of different groups of Anabaptists.

As the Anabaptist was by his very character an individualist, the centrifugal force was stronger than the centripetal. The "dissidence of dissent," as Matthew Arnold has called it, led to the establishment of comparatively small groups here and there, at-

<sup>1</sup> Works, ii, 326, 301, 82.

tached to some local leader and calling themselves by his name, or dividing from their brethren as to the importance of some doctrine or custom, often unimportant, or even absurd; such, for example, as the stand taken by the Swiss followers of Jakob Amman in the rejection of the use of buttons and of the practice of shaving. But behind all these differences, there was a consensus of doctrines and practices which markedly differentiated the Anabaptists from both Catholics and Protestants, and gave them a distinctive position in the world of their time and an important influence not only upon it but upon succeeding ages. As they settled down into law-abiding and industrious societies, the old hostility to them declined. After 1581 persecution of them ceased. Holland became a safe asylum for all Protestant sects, Anabaptists included. In 1672 the once-dreaded Anabaptists were legally recognized as a religious body, with the right unhindered to existence and freedom of worship.

The Peasants' War and the kingdom of Münster had made the name of Anabaptist feared in all the countries of Europe. England especially endeavored to establish a strict quarantine against the importation of the infection. In 1535, and again in 1538, severe edicts were issued there, threatening death or banishment to "divers and sundry strangers of the sect and false opinion of the Anabaptists and Sacramentaries, being lately come into this realm."

In 1536 ten persons were caught in this net and put to death, and ten others saved themselves by recanting.

In spite of this zeal for the true faith, Anabaptism spread in England and, what was worse from the conservative point of view, its doctrines spread and formed an innovating leaven of unrest among many who never became Anabaptists. In Holland a group had formed around Henrick Nicklaes, or "H.N.," as he is commonly called. One of his disciples, Christopher Vitell, an Englishman, on his return to England in the reign of Queen Mary, brought over H. N.'s books and doctrines and established the Family of Love. As was said of David Georg, who was the master of Nicklaes, so it might be said of Nicklaes and Vitell, that the former laid the egg but the latter brought forth the chicken. The Familists were accused by their opponents of immoral practices; and, while this is not certain — for their history is obscure — it is plain that they excited little direct influence as a body upon the national life, and they disappear in the multitudes of the sects which seethed in England in the middle of the seventeenth century. But they formed apparently a nursery for the growth of Anabaptist seed transplanted from Holland. Puritans, Separatists, Brownists, Independents, Ranters, Quakers, all sat at the table furnished by Anabaptism, and ate, some of one dish, some of another. Those of largest appetite were the



followers of Robert Browne, afterward called Independents or Congregationalists. Of these in 1593 there were 20,000 in England — so lamented Sir Walter Raleigh in Parliament.

In those stirring times, eager with the awakening of ecclesiastical liberty, it is not easy to say who was indebted to whom. The whole Protestant world was studying logic. If Luther could throw off the authority of the Church of Rome, why should not the Anabaptists throw off the authority of Luther? Why should not the Independent separate from the Church of England? Why should any man recognize any higher authority than himself? Stopping at any other resting place seemed illogical. To the eager progressive, the recognized Church — Roman, Lutheran, Calvinist, Anglican — seemed like a wharf. Vessel after vessel swings off from it and goes out on a wealth-producing voyage; but it stays with its feet in the mud and its face against all the currents, holding only what has been dumped on it. The result of this logical ferment was the formation of many a sect whose foundation was absolute individualism, with hardly enough community-mortar to hold it together. This tendency of division to divide found classic expression more than two centuries later among the Irvingites, or members of the Catholic Apostolic Church, as they called themselves. In a little town in Scotland the members of this body had seceded from one another, set after set, until



only two, an old man and an old woman, were left. A friend said to the woman, "Well, Janet, I suppose you consider that you and John are the only true representatives of the Apostles left in the world." "Weel, mon," said she, "I'm nae so sure o' John."

Out of this ecclesiastical welter, at the end of the sixteenth century, there emerges a John Smyth, preacher to the city of Lincoln in 1600, and in 1607 pastor of a Separatist congregation in Gainsborough. The region had been sown with Anabaptist seed, and some of it sprouted. The decision arrived at by Smyth and his friends, that the Church of England was not according to the pattern of the New Testament, naturally brought them into difficulty with the authorities, especially as many others had arrived at the same decision. Governor Bradford says:

After these things they could not long continue in any peaceable condition, but were hunted and persecuted on every side, so as their former afflictions were but as flea-bitings in comparison of these which now came upon them. For some were taken & clapped up in prison; others had their houses besett & watcht night and day & hardly escaped their [their watchers'] hands; and ye most were faine to flie & leave their houses & habitations and the means of their livelehood.<sup>1</sup>

Smyth and his church decided, though the ports were watched against unlicensed emigration, to es-

<sup>1</sup> William Bradford, *History of Plimouth Plantation*, ch. 1 (6).

cape and join some of their friends who were already settled at Amsterdam. This they succeeded in doing.

Meanwhile in Nottinghamshire in England, the country adjacent to Lincolnshire in which Gainsborough is situated, lived Thomas Helwys, whose house was a gathering-centre for the Puritan clergy and others who were discussing the vital ecclesiastical problems of the day. Before long, the discussion became too absorbing to admit of any other occupation. If the Christian Church ought to consist of Christians only, then the Church of England could be no true Church. Then one should separate from it. But since it was impossible for a Separatist to live in England outside a jail, one should leave England. So reasoned Thomas Helwys, and he left. In saying one should leave, it apparently did not occur to his logical mind to say two should leave. For when he got away to Holland without arrest, as he managed to do, it was without his wife. She was soon arrested and imprisoned; after which she disappears.

Helwys did not go to Amsterdam merely for the sake of attending a church of which he approved. He at once became an active member of John Smyth's congregation, and soon a contentious member. In every zealous religious controversy there is danger of a loss of the sense of proportion, that sense which insists that great things shall be kept great and small things small. The small tends to be mag-

nified, and the greatness of the great to be submerged. The fly on the window-pane becomes a bull in the meadow. So we find Smyth and Helwys soon coming to argumentative blows with the Church of England Separatists already established in Amsterdam, over the question whether it was permissible to use a translation of the Bible in public worship. Again they took their stand on logic. No apocrypha-writing but only the canonical Scriptures are to be used in the Church in the time of God's worship; every written translation is an apocrypha-writing and not canonical Scripture; therefore, every written translation is unlawful in the Church in the time of God's worship. The "teachers" should bring the original Hebrew and Greek and translate from them by voice. How it was that this avoided irreverence of translation and preserved the sacred character of inspired Scripture, they did not point out. But Smyth insisted that "There is no better warrant to bring translations of Scripture into the Church and to read them as parts and helps of worship than to bring in expositions, paraphrases, and sermons upon the Scripture, seeing all these are equally human in respect of the work, equally divine in respect of the matter they handle."<sup>1</sup>

Smyth's book of "Differences" contains "Certain Demands whereto wee desire direct and sound answer with proof from the Scriptures."

<sup>1</sup> John Smyth, *Differences of the Churches of the Separation*, p. 10.

Among the sixty-one questions are the following: "Whether metre, rhythm, and time be not quenching the Spirit? Whether voluntary be not as necessary in tune and words as in matter?"

The basis of the system of thought descending from the Anabaptists through the Separatists to Smyth and Helwys was individual freedom. The established order of any sort was not established by the individual, and was therefore a limitation on his freedom. Many of the Anabaptists and many of their ecclesiastical heirs held to that belief, which lies at the basis of mystical theology, that the less there is of man, the more there is of God. They therefore have deprecated the characteristics of strong personality, such as a foreseeing purpose and preparation for public speaking, and have identified the individual with his present self, his temporary feeling and desire. There must be no check on what each individual feels inwardly prompted to do. However fully good sense held them back from thorough-goingness in carrying out this conclusion, it was the end to which their train of thought and practice tended.

In Amsterdam Smyth and Helwys met the Mennonites, who, under their different name, were perpetuating the doctrines of the conservative Anabaptists. Soon the two seekers for the true Church discovered how necessary to the completeness of their individualistic position was the doctrine of adult

baptism. They began to taunt their Separatist English brethren in Amsterdam with their illogicality in regarding the Church of England as no true Church and yet as holding valid their own baptism by it when infants. Either both Church and baptism were true, or both were false. Glimpses of the dilemma had before this dawned upon the Separatists; but they had looked the other way, through the fear that by permitting re-baptism they would identify themselves with the dreaded Anabaptists. But Smyth could not go on without the comfort of a valid baptism. For this he did not turn to the Mennonites, and it would have been of no use to turn to his Separatist brethren. He therefore took the only course open to him and baptized himself, thus gaining the name by which he came to be known — the “Se-baptist.” He then baptized Thomas Helwys and others, and they proceeded to elect Smyth anew as pastor, with other officers, thus establishing for the first time among Englishmen, as they believed, a true Church after the primitive apostolic pattern. They did not then see the contradiction involved between the doctrine of an inner light which should direct belief, conduct, and organization, and the acceptance of the Bible as furnishing an authoritative standard for all these. Did not the existence of any external standard invalidate the autonomy of an internal standard? Moreover the inner light was not that of each individual, but it

was that of certain individuals acting upon what they conceived to be the utterances of the Bible. The scheme that resulted had neither the authority of antiquity nor that of the individual conscience. The attempt to be absolutely independent has always resulted in having some props to lean on.

This act of self-baptism aroused an ecclesiastical tempest. If he insisted on adult baptism, why did not Smyth turn to the Mennonites, who had long practised it? If adult baptism constituted a true Church, were not the Mennonites a true Church? These considerations, newly examined, appeared to Smyth at first possible, then weighty, then convincing. There had indeed then been a true Church in existence at the time he baptized himself and the others, and his action was therefore disorderly. They ought consequently to begin all over again, and receive baptism from the officers of this newly found true Church. But Helwys was firm. He had gone a mile with Smyth, but he would not be compelled to go twain. He would have nothing to do with another baptism. This was maintaining the necessity of an apostolic succession as tyrannous as that of the Church of England or Rome itself. Moreover there was no certainty as to where the Mennonites got their authority to administer adult baptism, no assurance therefore that it went back to the Apostles. Did anybody know by what authority John the Baptist was himself baptized? Was it



not all Christ's followers, and not ecclesiastical officers only, to whom he gave the command to make disciples and baptize? Among Smyth's many errors — for he held views on the Incarnation which Helwys did not regard as sound — the chief was "That the Church and ministry must come by Succession, contrary to his former profession in word and writing. And *that* by a supposed succession he cannot shew from whom nor when nor where."<sup>1</sup> Helwys therefore, and some dozen of his friends, proceeded to "cast out" Smyth and his friends, and to constitute themselves a Church of apostolic purity.

In reading of these petty ecclesiastical squabbles there is danger of falling into the same error into which the authors of them fell — a loss of the sense of proportion. The points at issue were small, but the aim behind these was great. Both Helwys and Smyth were loyally seeking for the truth and the truth only. To live was with them to progress; for they knew that the steps of a ladder are made not to stand on but to ascend by. They were at one with their opponent, Reverend John Robinson, in the conviction that "God hath yet more light to break forth out of His Holy Word."

And not only was this, their underlying aim, a noble one, but their judgment in regard to it, while partial, was sound as to the part which they saw. They felt the vast importance of the individual ele-

<sup>1</sup> *A Declaration of Faith*, sig. B 2.



ment in human life, and they tracked it to its remotest development and honored it there. To the corporate side of life — its necessary interrelations with others, its moulding through heredity and environment, the absorption of character through atmosphere — to this they were blind. The world needs to have many aspects of life pressed on its attention, one from one source and another from another. It is unfair to demand of one advocate that he should present all. If he utters his special message faithfully, he is doing the world a service.

Smyth's leanings toward the Mennonites continued. But the next year after his separation from Helwys — 1612 — they ceased to have interest for him; for by his death then he left the society which had been to him truly a Church militant, and joined that true Church for which all his life long he had been seeking. Three years after his death his congregation joined the Mennonites. About the time of his death Helwys and his handful of followers came to the conclusion that it was wrong to avoid persecution, and that they ought therefore to give the English authorities a chance at them. They consequently returned to England, and soon found what they sought. By 1613 John Murton, Helwys's chief helper, was in prison, and Helwys himself followed soon. His fate for the next two or three years is uncertain; but by April 8, 1616, when his uncle, Geoffrey Helwys, made his will, and when William

Shakespeare had just finished making his, Thomas Helwys was dead.

To the end of his life Helwys was, from the ecclesiastical point of view, a layman. But he and his followers maintained that they constituted a Church, and though he had never been ordained, he was not only their leader but their pastor. Under John Murton, after his release from prison, the little church in London grew. It and the branches it sent out became a nucleus around which gathered many Dissenters who could not be Presbyterians because of their objection to infant baptism, predestination, and a closely organized Church government. Helwys's Church had called itself Baptist. This was probably not an abbreviation of "Anabaptist," for they wished to avoid any suggestion of that dreaded name; but it pointed to the importance they attached to baptism as the centre of the Christian faith.

The mode of baptism, which to their successors has seemed a vital matter worth fighting for, was to these early Baptists of little importance. The majority of the Mennonites practised baptism by pouring a little water on the head of the candidate, though a branch of them, the Collegianten, brought into Holland in 1619 the custom of dipping the whole body under water. This they had perhaps borrowed from Switzerland or Poland; for immersion was practised in the former country by the

Unitarian Anabaptists as early as 1525, and in the latter before 1550. The thought underlying affusion was that of washing, cleansing, of which the poured water was the symbol. The thought underlying immersion was that of burial with Christ and rising again with Him. It was not until 1640 that immersion was introduced into England, and not until 1644 that it was prescribed by the Confession of Faith of seven Calvinist Baptist churches in London as the only authorized mode of baptism.

While Smyth and Helwys were by no means the only channels through which the influence of Anabaptism flowed into England, for, as I have said, it was denounced there as a public danger as early as 1535, their books had great weight in shaping the thought of their time which was tending to toleration in religion and democracy in government. It was John Smyth who drew up the principles of church government which the Pilgrims carried with them in the ship Mayflower from Amsterdam to Plymouth in New England in 1620. For when Smyth abandoned the Church of England in 1606, the question arose how he and his friends at Gainsborough should constitute the new Church which they desired to form. A member of the society, John Murton, the same who afterwards became Helwys's lieutenant, describes their method of procedure. "Do we not know," he says, "the beginning of his [Smyth's] Church? that there was first one stood

up and then another, and these two joined together and so a third, and these became a Church, say they.”<sup>1</sup> To this procedure Smyth gave a name taken from the Old Testament, a name which has done honorable service in the Churches of his order to this day. This step he declared constituted a “covenant.” Governor Bradford describes it more fully:

So many therefore of these professors as saw the evil of these things in these parts and whose hearts the Lord had touched with heavenly zeal for his truth, they shook off this yoke of antichristian bondage, and as the Lord’s free people joined themselves, by a covenant of the Lord, into a church estate in the fellowship of the Gospel, to walk in all His ways made known, or to be made known, according to their best endeavours, whatever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them.<sup>2</sup>

According to Edward Winslow in his “Brief Narration” of 1646, it was this covenant adopted at Gainesborough which formed the foundation of the Church in Plymouth, New England. “They also,” he says, “entered into covenant with God and one another to walk in all His ways revealed or as they should be made known unto them, and to worship Him according to His will revealed in His written word only.”<sup>3</sup> The Massachusetts Bay Colony also,

<sup>1</sup> *A Description of what God hath predestinated concerning Man*, p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Plimouth Plantation*, ch. 1 (6).

<sup>3</sup> *Young’s Chronicles*, p. 387.

led by John Cotton, adopted the same plan: "I am sure Mr. Cotton hath made some use of those principles and arguments on which Mr. Smyth and others went concerning the constitution of the Christian Church."<sup>1</sup>

A difference of emphasis led to a division into two channels of the stream which had been fed by Anabaptist sources. On the one hand were those who held that the act constituting a Church was the covenant and that baptism was the seal of this covenant, to be administered to those who were already within the Church. On the other hand, others maintained that baptism was the means for constituting a Church and for admitting to it those who were without. The former became Congregationalists, the latter Baptists.

It has generally been the case that progress has come first in the State and then in the Church. With regard to democracy in America, however, the Church was the leader. The formative power of a "covenant" was recognized as too valuable to be allowed to remain in the possession of the Church only. When the Pilgrims from Holland in 1620 reached the shores of New England, they found that in settling there they would be outside the limits of the patent which had been granted them in England, and therefore without civil authority. This did not deter them, for they proceeded to create such authority by a covenant. They met in the cabin of their

<sup>1</sup> Roger Williams's *Answer to John Cotton*, 1644, ch. 9.

vessel, the Mayflower, and drew up the following agreement, which has come to be called the Mayflower Compact:

In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign lord, King James, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland king, defender of the faith, &c., having undertaken, for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith and honour of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod the 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our sovereign lord, King James, of England, France, and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini 1620.<sup>1</sup>

There was a list of forty-eight signers.<sup>2</sup> Of this Compact it was said in 1802 by John Quincy Adams,

<sup>1</sup> William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, bk. ii, ch. 1. (Spelling modernized.)

<sup>2</sup> Not given in Bradford, but in *New England's Memorial*, Thomas Morton.



afterwards President of the United States, "This is perhaps the only instance in human history of that positive, original social compact which speculative philosophers have imagined as the only legitimate source of government. Here was a unanimous and personal assent by all the individuals of the community to the association by which they became a nation."<sup>1</sup>

I am not aware that the inheritors of the Anabaptist tradition in Europe after the seventeenth century ever went so far as to attempt to apply their democratic principles to the State. They were interested in ecclesiastical matters. But the Mayflower Compact is the connecting link between this earlier inheritance and the foundation stone of democracy in America — the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The later utterance has the same sturdy ring as the earlier: "We therefore, the representatives of the United States, do in the name of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish . . . that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states."

I have mentioned the special views of this and

<sup>1</sup> John A. Goodwin, *The Pilgrim Republic*, p. 65. "This was the birth-place of popular constitutional liberty"; Bancroft's *United States*, i, 310. "It was here that the government based on the will of the governed was first established on the American coast. . . . This was the first meeting of the kind of which the history of the world gives us any information; and if we may judge of the wisdom of its deliberations by their results, it has never been surpassed"; *North American Review*, i, 336, 340.



that body which from time to time handed on what I have called the Anabaptist inheritance. For lack of space I have said nothing of one of the most important of them — the Quakers. Let me sum up that inheritance, looking back upon it as a whole. The fundamental principle of the Anabaptists was the immediate relation of the soul to God. No priestly mediators, no intervening ritual, must be allowed to come between a man and his Maker. "God and I; I and God," was the solemn chant resounding through the chambers in which the soul resided. This constituted a common bond among men, the deepest and strongest, sometimes leading to community of goods. Yet it was not a recognition of the brotherhood of mankind which was implied in this; that was still several centuries distant; but it was believers only, those who heard God's voice within and responded to it, who were bound together thus as brothers. To the mediæval mind the Church was an ark, whose function it was to save those inside it; it had not awakened to the necessity and the glory of saving the world outside. The Anabaptists belonged in this respect to their day; their interest was centred on those within. Believers only could be church members; and this made infant baptism meaningless and impossible, because an infant cannot understand the gospel and deliberately and intelligently accept Christ. While adult baptism was thus essential, the mode of it was indifferent. If one ceased to be a consistent believer through moral

lapse or theological laxity, he must be promptly removed from the body of the faithful until he should amend his ways.

This system of minute and rigid discipline was adhered to until comparatively recent times, though it caused many a heart-burning and many a schism. Luther had denied the freedom of the will; Calvin's predestinarianism took away moral responsibility. Until Jakobus Harmensen, or Arminius, being called in 1604 to curse the enemies of Calvinism, turned and blessed them, the Anabaptists were almost the sole defenders of man's moral responsibility and his freedom of will.

Every body of Christians then accepted the words of the Bible, literally interpreted, as the final authority, though to this the Roman Church added tradition. It was long before there could come the modern recognition that there is much in the Bible which has the impress and the limitations of its authors and its age, which yet embodies conceptions that are eternal; long before biblical criticism could ask its divinely bidden question, "Whose image and superscription is this?" and could proceed to its important task of rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's. It is, therefore, only a matter of course that Anabaptist custom is found basing doctrines and practices on texts of Scripture which, according to modern biblical study, give no warrant for them. The Anabaptists were, therefore, often narrow, big-

oted, legalistic, fanatical. But here again they were of their day; and their heirs have generally been more ready to welcome the clearer light of modern thought than have the established Churches which cast them out. They were opposed to the union of Church and State and to Church establishment. They refused to pay taxes for the support of the Church. They denounced war, though all except a few loyally took part in it when summoned by the governments under which they lived. They proclaimed universal toleration in days when toleration was regarded as a sin and a crime. They proclaimed freedom of conscience, freedom in teaching, organization, worship. They were, in short, the modern men of their time.

I have endeavored to point out how much in our present civilization which we regard as most precious, in religion, in society, in government, has come to us as an inheritance from those sects which were cast out and persecuted by the dominant and established forms of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If the Anabaptist fathers could look upon our modern world, they would see almost all that they stood for adopted by it. They have in great degree come to their own. And while this is a belated compensation for their innumerable and immeasurable sufferings, it is a large one.

NOTE. — Since writing the above, I see that Professor Masson also, in his *Life of John Milton* (iii, 99), assigns to the Baptists the honor of being the first to assert in English the full principle of liberty of conscience.

## II

### JOACHIM OF FLORIS <sup>1</sup>

IN southern Italy, in the year 1202, there died a man who had a wide influence on those of his own time and on succeeding generations — Joachim, Abbot of Floris in Calabria. He came of a rich and noble family and had been brought up as a courtier at the court of Roger, Duke of Apulia. It was the fashion in those days to make a journey to Palestine. To some it was a crusade, to some a pilgrimage, to some both. Joachim set out to see the holy places in luxury, as a wealthy young noble should, with a retinue of servants. But when he reached Constantinople, he found a pestilence raging there; which so impressed him with the shortness and misery of life that he dismissed his train and continued his journey with only one companion. The story goes that he fell in the desert, overcome with thirst. Perhaps a modern reader might suspect that he carried some Byzantine germs with him. But, as with the Apostle Paul, the occasion proved to be his conversion. He had a vision of a man standing by a river of oil, that sacred element of priestly consecration, and bidding him drink. This he did, and at once, though previously unlearned, he was possessed of a knowl-

<sup>1</sup> Other forms of this place-name are Fiore, Flore, Flora.

edge of all the Scripture. After passing his initiation into sainthood by living for a long time at the bottom of a well, he was rewarded at Easter by a burst of glory and by the revelation of the hidden correspondences between the Old Testament and the New. This part of his history, however, it must be remembered, has been handed down only by the legends which gathered round him after his death. But that they lasted until the seventeenth century shows how deep an impression he had made.

After returning from the East, he kept away from his father's house and devoted himself to preaching to the people. But as this was not permissible to a layman, he became a priest and a member of the Cistercian Order. Strict as this was, it did not satisfy his appetite for austerities, and when he was chosen Abbot of Corazzo, he could not endure the prospect of such worldliness, and fled. But he was captured and compelled to take up the duties of Abbot, until he appealed to the Pope and obtained permission to be de-abboted. He then retired to a hermitage. But his reputation as a saint found him out and drew adoring disciples. Some regulation of their companionship was necessary, and this soon developed into the establishment of a new Order. The Rule which was adopted anticipated the Rule of St. Francis by a quarter of a century in taking poverty as its foundation.<sup>1</sup> By 1196, when the Rule was for-

<sup>1</sup> "Qui vere monachus est nihil reputat esse suum nisi citharam." In Apoc. 183 a 2.

mally approved by Pope Celestin III, the Order had already spread from the mother-house of San Giovanni in Floris, and had established itself in several other monasteries.

Joachim regarded himself as inspired and his writings as divinely revealed. Of these, that which attracted most attention in his own day was his tract on the nature of the Trinity, in which he opposed the commonly received view, that of Peter Lombard. This brought him under the suspicion of heresy. In 1200, however, he declared himself a true Catholic and submitted all his writings to papal examination. He was given a certificate of orthodoxy, which served him well through the remainder of his life. But at the Lateran Council in 1215 his views were condemned; though this condemnation was reversed five years later, through a successful appeal by his followers to the Pope, and by a bull declaring him a good Catholic and forbidding denunciation of his Order.

The most important of his genuine works were three — "*Concordia utriusque Testamenti*," which was the only one published during his life; "*Decachordon, sive Psalterium decem Cordarum*," and his "*Expositio in Apocalypsin*." His reputation, however, as a prophet was due rather to spurious writings composed after his death and assigned to him. Of these there were many, for they served the purpose of an important part of the Franciscan



Order. After the death of St. Francis, in 1226, a movement of protest arose in the Order against the literal interpretation of the Rule in regard to poverty. On the one hand the Spirituals, as they came to be called, insisted that the prescriptions of their founder must be rigidly observed. No property whatever must be owned by the monks. In one of the monasteries a novice had with difficulty learned to read, and had obtained from his immediate superior permission to own a psalter. But though he found great joy in this, his conscience troubled him as to what Francis himself would say to it. So when the saint came soon after on a visit to the monastery, the novice approached and said to him that he did not wish to keep his beloved psalter without the knowledge of the Head of the Order. Francis put him off with some remarks on the vanity of human glory. But several days afterward the monk returned to the charge. Francis turned on him and said: "When you have got your psalter, you will want a breviary; and when you have got your breviary, you 'll sit in a stall like a great prelate and order one of your companions, 'Bring me my breviary.'" Then, taking some ashes from the hearth Francis sprinkled them on the novice's head, saying, "There's your breviary! There's your breviary!"

On the other hand, the other party in the Order, the Conventuals, declared that for living in the world some conformity to its ways must be allowed;



monasteries at least, if not individuals, must be permitted to acquire property. Against this laxity the Spirituals brought forward the name of the sainted Abbot of Floris, pointing out that he had not only denounced the worldliness of his time, but had foretold the near approach of the end of the present and the beginning of a new era. It was therefore, as Elisha said to Gehazi, no time to receive money and to receive garments and olive-yards and vineyards and sheep and oxen and man-servants and maid-servants. The boldness of their denunciations of worldliness in high places shows how great the evil had become, not only in their Order, but in the Church. Those who were zealous in combatting these evils found a potent authority in the works of Abbot Joachim. Many books were issued purporting to be by him, denouncing the laxity of the times in general and of the Franciscan Order in particular, and even professing to point to Francis before his birth as the one who would inaugurate the new and saving era.

The thirteenth century was marked by a renaissance of the human spirit almost as great as that of the sixteenth century. Youth always contains contradictory characteristics existing side by side. So this tumultuous thirteenth century, while religion was the centre of its thought and life, was full of unquestioning faith and the most daring speculation, of subordination to authority and the mystic's self-

sufficiency, of distrust of human reason and bold philosophy, of partisan devotion to the Church and to orthodoxy and of fearless attacks on dogma and ecclesiasticism. And the critical attitude existed not so much outside the Church as within it. Public opinion outside the Church had hardly come into existence, and if it had, there was little non-ecclesiastical literature to be its expression. But within the Church men were thinking widely and keenly and publishing their thoughts; and the fact which impressed many of the most earnest thinkers was the difference between the Church of their own day, and the Church as established by Christ. To them the contrast was startling. What they saw was a Church — so they declared — wholly given over to worldliness, to sensuality, lust, avarice, greed, indolence, neglect of its high calling. The bitterness of their denunciations of the Church and its dignitaries could hardly be exaggerated. The Church had made the world a hell. Rome was Babylon; she was the Scarlet Woman of the Apocalypse, the barren fig-tree which Christ cursed. The Pope was Antichrist and the cardinals and prelates were his members. The Curia was the most venal and extortionate of all courts. All orders in the Church were corrupt; the sheep were neglected and handed over to wolves. The age-long rival of the Church, the Empire, was hailed as the agent of God for punishing the Church by overthrowing its pride.

It must be constantly borne in mind that these bitter denunciations were uttered, not by outsiders, but by those who were, until they were driven out, children of the Church. Joachim, Amaury de Bène, Gherardo, Ghiscolo, John of Parma, Peter Waldo, Jacopone da Tode, Arnaldo de Vilanova, were all loyal sons of the Church, as were later Jerome of Prague, Huss, Gansfort, Wiclif, and Luther. It is this fact that gives special weight to their criticisms. Yet their earnest efforts after reform were sternly repressed by the Church and its servant the Inquisition, and the old conditions in Church and State remained substantially unchanged for three hundred years more, until the Renaissance and its sister, the Reformation, burst upon the world in the sixteenth century.

The opinions of Joachim on which the revolutionary assertions attributed to him were founded, and for which he has in subsequent times been chiefly known, were what might be called his philosophy of history. It has been the endeavor of earnest souls in every age to study the past in order to find its meaning, the part it has performed in the divine purpose for the world, and so to throw light upon the future. This study has varied from an attempt to wrest the secrets of the future from certain biblical texts to the discovery of a divine plan of evolution, of which past and future are orderly stages. Joachim declares that history must have the

same basis as God, and since He is triune, history must be threefold. The course of the world falls, therefore, into three eras. The first is that of God the Father, extending from the creation of the world to the birth of Jesus Christ. This was characterized by law, by force, by fear, by obedience, by the acquisition of knowledge. These were the foundation-stones of all religion. Next came the era of God the Son, extending from the birth of Christ to the time of Joachim himself. In this the chief characteristic was the worship of a historic being, radiating from its spiritual centre, love, and in this worship organization and ritual had a prominent part. This was to be followed by an era of the Spirit, in which the soul would not so much as bow before the Almighty Creator seated in the heavens, or look back through the centuries to a historic being to whom to adjust itself, but an era which, by direct and intimate communion with God, would be one with Him in will, in purpose, in joy, and in profound peace.

The two distinguishing characteristics of mysticism are the conviction that human and divine are opposed to each other, so that the particular must cease in order that the universal may prevail; and secondly, a sense of the immediacy of the presence of God. The former characteristic gave rise to asceticism, with its ill-treatment of the flesh; the latter to the retreat of the soul within itself and the in-

communicableness of its experiences. Joachim was the first in mediæval times to set forth these two characteristics clearly and conjointly, and he may therefore be regarded as the founder of modern mysticism. Many sects arose claiming this immediacy of relation to God and drawing therefrom the logical conclusion that there was consequently no need of priestly mediation. The Church was therefore, in modern phrase, a luxury, not a necessity. Such dangerous doctrine could not of course be tolerated by the ecclesiastical authorities, and merciless persecutions, such as that of the Albigenses, were carried on against the heretics.

Joachim, like all other devout persons of his time, had no doubt that all important events of the world were predicted in the Scriptures. He therefore set himself to the task, in which so many pious souls, even to our own day, have so pathetically and pitifully spent their hopeless efforts, of endeavoring to make the mysterious numbers of the Book of the Revelation reveal the secrets of a still distant future. From these and other parts of the Bible, Joachim deduced that the era of Jesus Christ was to last forty-two generations, which, estimating a generation at thirty years, would bring the end in 1260 years from the birth of Christ. The beginning of the end of this second era had, it is true, been in the seed planted by St. Benedict in the sixth century, when he founded monasticism in the West. But that was only an

adumbration, a promise of what was to come. In the year 1260 the era of the Spirit would begin, peace would reign throughout the world, quiet contemplation — the height of monastic desire — would prevail, all men would be friends, and, since the preceding eras had been as winter and spring, this would be the full glorious summer of the soul.

In the twelfth century this thought of the dominance of the Holy Spirit was more or less in the air. It found expression in a manner strikingly like that of Joachim in Amaury de Bène. He was born in a little village near Chartres towards the end of the twelfth century, became a professor of philosophy, and died in 1207. He held that primitive matter was simple, having neither quantity nor quality. God also was by nature simple; but as there could not be two independent simple beings, God and matter must be one and the same. Anticipating the modern theory of the continual movement of atoms, he maintained that matter was in continual motion. This would ultimately result in the absorption of the Universe in God. But before that, the vicissitudes of nature would have divided the history of the world into three eras, like those just mentioned, corresponding to the three Persons of the Trinity; the Mosaic period being that of God the Father, the Gospel period that of God the Son, to be succeeded by that of the Holy Spirit. In the second era every one might be regarded as a member of Christ, since



his body was in everything as well as in the sacramental bread. All too were, or at least were capable of being, inspired; God spoke through Ovid as well as through St. Augustine. The grace of the Holy Spirit was sufficient for salvation without any further agency. There was no resurrection of the body other than the final absorption of all things into the primitive matter.

The three world-eras in the systems of Amaury and Joachim are at once noticeable; in the rest of their systems they differed. Joachim would have shrunk from Amaury's pantheism, and Amaury had little interest in Joachim's apocalyptic speculations. The question of course arises whether either borrowed from the other. It is almost certain that they never met, for Joachim was never in France nor was Amaury ever in Italy. The latter died young, of chagrin, it is said, at having been obliged to abjure his opinions; the former when he died was over seventy. It is not likely therefore that the older man was influenced by the younger; it is not unlikely that the younger was influenced by the older, for Joachim's opinions and books were widely spread before his death. Amaury's pantheism was maintained by one of his disciples, Ortlieb of Strasburg, whose followers, "Ortlibenses" or "Brethren of the Free Spirit," as they called themselves, had an influence on German mysticism. But Amaury's following was far less extensive and important than



that of Joachim, who was an inspirer of the orthodox and the father of heresies for more than a century.

The assurance of the glorious reign of the Spirit sank deep into the hearts of many who, like Simeon and Anna, were waiting for the consolation of Israel. Suddenly, in the year 1254, there appeared in Paris a book called "*Liber introductorius in Evangelium æternum*," taking its title from a passage in the Book of the Revelation: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people."<sup>1</sup> This book consisted of the three undoubted writings of Joachim, together with explanatory and amplifying glosses and a lengthy Introduction, in which Joachim's views are given daring and unsparing development. The great popular success which the book at once obtained shows how wide-spread among all classes were the opinions of the author. That these were indeed daring, the following extracts may show. In the coming era, it was asserted, there will be no priests, and going barefoot, as was prescribed by the Rule of Francis, will not be imperative for monks. The life of action had previously ruled the world; henceforth there would be only the superior condition, the life of contemplation. The world therefore would become a vast monastery. The Pope has knowledge of the literal sense only of the Scriptures;

<sup>1</sup> Rev., xiv, 6.

knowledge of the true spiritual sense is not given to him. If he undertakes to decide the spiritual sense, his judgment is rash, and it is not necessary to take account of it. Spiritual men are not bound to obey the Roman Church or to acquiesce in its decisions in matters of God. The Greeks have done well in separating from the Roman Church, for they walk more according to the spirit and are nearer salvation. The Holy Spirit will save the Greeks; Jesus Christ will attend to the salvation of the Latins; while God the Father will watch over the Jews and will save them from their enemies without their abandonment of Judaism. The era of the Father was characterized by three great men with twelve companions — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the Twelve Patriarchs. The era of the Son had Zacharias, John the Baptist, with Jesus and the Twelve Apostles. The era of the Spirit has, as described in the Apocalypse, the man clothed with linen — Joachim; the angel with the sharp sickle — perhaps St. Dominic; and the angel with the sign of the living God — St. Francis, who had had his dozen of apostles. With the coming of the Everlasting Gospel the gospel of Jesus Christ had lost its value, for both Old and New Testaments are abrogated. As the Old Testament was the book of the first era and the New Testament that of the second era, so the Everlasting Gospel would be the book of the third era. The coming of that era will be preceded by a reign of evil

under a false and worldly pope, who will bring his courtesans and his horses into the very churches. The Church of Rome was declared to be Babylon the haughty, and the abuse of her wealth and temporal power was denounced in terms as bitter as the extreme reformer might use.

That the publication of these views received so ready and extensive a welcome shows how widespread was the conviction that the established Christianity was a failure. The author of the book was commonly believed to be John of Parma, the General of the Franciscan Order. He was too highly placed, however, and the Order was too popular, to make it wise to attack him directly on the ground of such authorship. But after he had been induced to resign his position in the Order, he was brought to trial and condemned on the ground of sympathy in general with Joachitism, and was allowed to choose a place of exile. He died in 1289, having acquired the reputation of sainthood, and soon became the agent of many miracles and an object of reverence, so that in 1777 he was beatified in spite of objections still clinging to him as the supposed author of "The Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel." The real author, however, was probably a Franciscan monk, Gherardo da Borgo San Donnino.<sup>1</sup> He was an ardent

<sup>1</sup> The authorship, however, has been, even in modern times, diversely assigned. It is assigned to John of Parma, by Rousselot (*Histoire de l'Évangile Éternel*, p. 134); to Gherardo by Renan (*Nouvelles Études d' Histoire religieuse*, p. 273); and to him also by Henry C. Lea (*A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, iii, 22).

Joachite, who in 1250, on account of his learning, was made a professor of theology in the University of Paris. Here he devoted himself to the study of apocalyptics, and here he was when "The Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel" appeared. His known views and his intimacy with John of Parma brought him under suspicion. But the book was so dangerous and subversive of the whole established order of things and yet so popular, that it was considered unsafe to give it even the publicity of open refutation. It must be passed over, and allowed to fall into silence as soon as possible. Those who were responsible for it, however, or who sympathized with it, could be brought to trial on other grounds. Gherardo was therefore tried as an upholder of Joachim's views on the Trinity. He was a man of learning, modesty, loveliness, and courage. But his condemnation was a foregone conclusion. If he had not been a Franciscan, he would have gone to the stake. He went instead to chains and a dungeon, bread and water, which he managed to endure for eighteen years, when he died in prison without having ever recanted a single one of his cherished beliefs.

At first, as has been said, it was thought best to oppose "The Everlasting Gospel" by silence. But soon refutations began to be published, and at last the Bishop of Paris sent to Pope Alexander IV for a definite pronouncement on the book. He appointed a commission to examine the matter, which was

speedily done, and in July, 1255, the book was formally condemned. Its influence, however, continued greater in southern France and elsewhere than in Italy. It gave comforting support to the Albigenses, the Brethren of the Free Spirit, the Beghards, with many smaller sects, and colored as well the outlook of the Cathari, that widely extended Manichæan movement which, to the excited mind of the Church, seemed spread like a poisonous malaria, covering a multitude of sinful ills, and which deserves a moment's description.

In 276 A.D. there had been crucified in Persia a man, Mani, whose doctrines were founded on the fundamental principle of Zoroastrianism—that the world is governed by two conflicting powers, good and evil. Mani identified good with the spirit or will, and evil with the flesh, with matter. To those who were oppressed with the burden of the world or with individual sufferings, this seemed a comforting explanation. The world was not a mere confusion without purpose, but a great battle was going on, in which one could lend a hand to either side, and his alliance would be rewarded hereafter if not here. The readiest way to enlist in the fight for good was to keep the flesh under, and therefore to crush natural desires and subdue one's own body. The severer the asceticism, the greater was the merit. As the world is material, its creator must have been the god of matter, Satan, and as the Old Testament

declares the creator to have been Jehovah, He and Satan must be the same. Jesus Christ was the true object of worship; and as the soul might and should have direct communication with him, there was no need of priest, pope, or ritual. Most of the smaller sects, of which Cathari came to be the generic name, had, it is true, ritual of a simple sort, but it was not regarded as of primary importance. They were anti-ecclesiastical, and the Church, of course, gave them back their attitude and persecuted them as heretics. Abandonment of all that could be regarded as worldliness, abstinence from all flesh-food,<sup>1</sup> the prohibition of marriage (said the stricter sort), or at least its rigid limitation (said the less strict) — these were foundation principles which were sufficiently attractive to draw thousands throughout the centuries into sects of different names, all characterized by unflinching adherence to their special beliefs and a cheerful readiness to face persecution and death.

Such were the Cathari, or Patarins, as they were called in Italy. The most outrageous stories about them were circulated and believed by the uninformed. But those who had the best means of acquiring information, the inquisitors before whom the Cathari were brought, uniformly admitted that such tales had no foundation in fact. St. Bernard, their uncompromising enemy, says: "If you interrogate

<sup>1</sup> Though by a curious exception fish was allowed.



them, nothing can be more Christian; as to their conversation, nothing less reprehensible, and what they speak they prove by deeds. As for the morals of the heretic, he cheats no one, he oppresses no one, he strikes no one. His cheeks are pale with fasting, he eats not the bread of idleness, his hands labor for his livelihood." The pallor which St. Bernard notes came to be regarded as convincing proof of Catharism, and there were zealous inquisitors who sent to the stake victims who were proved to be Cathari solely by the pallor of their skins.<sup>1</sup>

Millennarianism, the anticipation of a speedy coming of the kingdom of heaven on earth, and mysticism, the claim to immediate and overruling relationship with God, have always had antinomianism as their logical attendant. Why should one trouble one's self with setting things to rights here or observing man-made laws with however good an aim, when the whole scheme of things will be shortly overturned and a new glorious order will prevail? Indeed, the worse things are the better; for as long as the present order is not so very bad, God may allow it to continue; therefore make it worse, so that He may be induced to interfere as soon as possible. This in political terms is the argument of the Red International — revolution is the necessary prelude

<sup>1</sup> "Audierat enim eos solo pallore notare hæreticos, quasi quos pallere constaret, hæreticos esse certum esset." *Gesta episcoporum Leodiensium*; quoted in Renan's *Nouvelles Études d'Histoire religieuse*, p. 313.

to the establishment of the true order. Here in America there are earnestly religious persons who oppose all humanitarian efforts and benevolent schemes for the uplifting of the world on the ground that they do not want the world bettered; they want it to go from bad to worse, in order that Christ may the sooner come to redeem it. St. Paul assured his Thessalonian converts that Jesus would descend from heaven with shouting and the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; that the faithful would then arise, and with them those who were still alive would be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and be there forever with him, and that this might take place any day. After this disturbing assurance had had its natural result in upheaving the ordinary courses of life, he was obliged to write a second letter to calm the disturbance he had created, warning his converts not to be upset by what he had said, but to check disorder and go on with their daily occupations. Yet even he declares that before these things come to pass there will be a great outbreak of evil upon earth.<sup>1</sup> Many an ardent reformer has been ruined by his own logic or by that of the Left Wing of his party, who have insisted on dragging the millennium in with ropes, regardless of the confusion wrought. So Luther was embarrassed by the Zwickau prophets and the Anabaptists of Münster, and so France found herself seriously hin-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess., iv, 13; 2 Thess., ii.

dered in establishing herself after the War of 1870 by the Paris Commune.

The "Liber introductorius in Evangelium æternum" was soon suppressed, but its influence increased as the fateful year 1260 approached, in which, according to the prophecy of Joachim, the new era of the Spirit would be established. Prophecy in the form of prediction has always been a favorite occupation of those who had little critical judgment but much reliance on authority. Trust in prophecies as to future happenings has held much the same place as trust in proverbs for direction in the affairs of life. The Sibylline Books exercised a profound influence for centuries. The author of the *Dies Irae* gives to the Sibyl an authority and inspiration equal to that of David the Psalmist:

Solvat saeculum in favilla,  
Teste David cum Sibylla.

The claims of Joan of Arc were tested by comparison with the prophecies of Merlin. Wherever there was an ardent millennarian, the books of Daniel and the Revelation seemed to offer a sure and easy entrance into the events of the future by the mere use of mathematics and logic. Prophecy was a safety valve for minds which were disturbed by the condition of things; it permitted freedom of speech within the Church. The prophets in all ages have rarely been inhabitants of cities, where the full tide of human life appears more or less in perspective, but have

been dwellers in the wilderness or the desert, where undisturbed meditation has led to concentration of interest on some one theme till it subordinated to itself all others. So the prophet has been a man of one idea, and this has been the source of his inspiration as an arousing voice, but of his weakness for organization and action. Joachim, remote in Floris, was an idealist of this sort. He developed his scheme of reform for the evils of the world, which were real enough, but which he contemplated mainly from a distance. He made no attempt to carry the scheme into effect — if indeed he could have done so, since the date of its full inauguration was still in the future. But so long as he was merely a voice crying in the wilderness, the Church did not mind him. It smelled, it is true, danger in him; but the Church then as always cared little for opinion so long as it did not attempt to pass into action. He died in the odor of orthodoxy, which he always stoutly maintained was his right. Yet he provided an arsenal of weapons for others to use against the Church, and was the father of heresies which the Church spent a century in putting down. The claim to the possession of the Holy Spirit is fatal to ecclesiasticism. If the guide is within, what need is there of external authority? Joachim founded his system on the Trinity. But Olivists, Fraticelli, Albigenses, and mystics of all names who reaped the harvest of the seed he sowed, threw aside all care for orthodox doctrine and went to the furthest extremes of individualism. The

mystic, in spite of Santa Teresa and a few like her, has always tended to disregard all the world except God and himself and to become himself absorbed in God. The Church has therefore left mystics undisturbed so long as they have created no disturbance; but when they have published their doctrines or organized a following, has condemned them, with Huss and Molinos, to the stake or the prisons of the Inquisition.

The work of Joachim was, therefore, in reality a poem, like the *Dies Irae* of Thomas of Celano in the next generation. It was not a programme, as it was taken to be by Gherardo da Borgo and others who proclaimed the "Evangelium æternum." When it was found that, as a programme, it did not fit the events of the time, and especially when the fateful year 1260 had come and gone and, as was the complaint of those who were disappointed at the non-appearance of Christ, all things continued as they were from the beginning of creation, then the faith of many began to be shaken. It was remembered that Joachim's previous prophecies had not always been fulfilled; for he had predicted that Saladin would lose Jerusalem seven years after having taken it, but there he still sat in possession. It is true that St. Bernard had predicted that the second Crusade would be successful, though it had turned out a failure; but then he was a saint and, even more important, undoubtedly orthodox. But while nothing

could shake the faith of the ardent believers in the coming of the kingdom of the Spirit, those who cared more for its material than its spiritual benefits began to lose faith and withdraw from a connection which was growing dangerous.

Such was the Franciscan Fra Salimbene. He was born at Parma in 1221, and when he was sixteen years old entered the Order of St. Francis in spite of the violent opposition of his father. It may be questioned whether this step was prompted solely by devotion to religion. Salimbene was all his life eager to be in the midst of things, and in 1237 Franciscanism was distinctly the thing. The Order was having a marvellous success. By the middle of the century it had 8000 monasteries, with 200,000 monks. Discipline was not uniform, and a monk need by no means look forward to spending all his days in one house. Salimbene was transferred from one monastery to another; he was sent on missions and various ecclesiastical errands; he was apparently a favorite with the authorities and was given permission at times to travel on his own account. He made good use of his opportunities. Wherever anything interesting was going on, he almost always managed to be there. He got invited to the tables of the great and was a favorite with ladies. He had the insatiable curiosity and the close observation characteristic of the Renaissance. He had also its mixture of opposing traits; he was pleasingly worldly, yet



truly religious; a great gossip, yet knowing when to keep his mouth shut; devoted to the gay spectacle of life around him, but devoted to his Order; a chronicler of trivial incidents from here, there, and everywhere, and so a historian of his century; a diner-out, a hearty eater, an ample drinker, fond of a decorous flirtation, thoroughly a man of the world, and yet thoroughly an ecclesiastic with some genuine religion thrown in. The world was a great show and he was immensely interested in being a spectator. If he had been a courtier of the seventeenth century and had lived in England, his name would have been Samuel Pepys. Life was sweet to him, and toward the end of it and of the century he wrote in his "Chronicle,"

Heu! heu! mundi vita,  
Quare me dilectas ita?  
Cum non possis mecum stare,  
Quid me cogis te amare?

It was natural enough that he should have become an adherent of Joachitism when it was attracting the attention of the ecclesiastical world, and quite as natural that after 1260 he should have lost faith in it. When he met his old friend Gherardo da Borgo San Donnino, who was on his way to Paris to be condemned to perpetual imprisonment for his sturdy adherence to Joachitism, Salimbene declined to be convinced by Gherardo's arguments and went his way among the courtiers and ladies and brethren of his Order. Some years after the "Introductorium in Evangelium æternum" had been condemned, Sal-

imbene saw a copy of it in a convent. Knowing that he had been considered a Joachite, the head of the convent asked him his opinion of the book. But Salimbene, fearing some snare, declared that it should be burned at once, which was done.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of Joachitism was felt in the latter half of the thirteenth century in the rise of many petty sects, — Apostoli, Crociati, Gaudenti, Flagellanti, Saccati, Militi di Gesu Christo, — some of which were soon persecuted out of existence, while some died peacefully of inanition. But upon the more important sects, such as the Cathari, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, its influence, as has been said, was strong. Not that this was always a direct influence — often it was indirect. Joachitism laid foundation thoughts which became the premises necessitating conclusions inimical to the system of the Church. For it seemed to regard the Christianity of its day as a temporary phase of religion, which would give way to a different stage, in which the Church would yield place to a new and higher organization. To maintain this was of course heresy. Sometimes a breach between the ecclesiastical authorities and the individual has been averted by the aid of powerful friends, as later in the case of Wiclif, or by concessions on both sides, as with Erasmus. But in the main the persecutions for heresy in the thirteenth

<sup>1</sup>“Dimisi totaliter istam doctrinam et dispono non credere nisi quae videro.” Salimbene, *Chron.*, p. 131.

and fourteenth centuries were successful in stamping it out or driving it underground. They by no means abolished it, as the Reformation of the sixteenth century showed.

The wonder is that Protestantism did not appear two or three centuries earlier. For the Middle Ages were not at all, as is sometimes supposed, ages of unquestioning faith and submission to the Church. The most daring speculations and the bitterest denunciations of the Church were openly published. But the uprise of the human spirit in the Renaissance weakened the fighting forces upon which the Church had relied. It was no longer possible to assume in the popular mind a complete conviction that the Church had full control of the destinies of the future life, or that its decisions for this life were infallible, or that its priests and prelates constituted a holy caste. These foundations had by the sixteenth century been shaken, and in spite of the organized forces of Loyola, the old conditions could not be reestablished. Although the world did not feel the impress of Francis Bacon's revolutionary method of thought until the early part of the next century, something of the scientific spirit was in the air in the sixteenth century, and made the old ways of deductive reasoning less comfortable. It is surprising to a modern mind, trained to ask first of all, "What is the fact?" to note the undemonstrated character of the bases assumed, on which down to

recent times systems have been built. Joachim was confident that there must be three eras in history because there were three Persons in the Godhead. Heretics had a high standard of morality; therefore purity of morals was a sign of heresy.<sup>1</sup>

Symbolism was readily adjustable to the exigences of all occasions; thus Joachim makes Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, represent the Jewish Synagogue; but a little later he needs a representative of the Church of the second era, that of Christ, and behold, Elizabeth becomes such. In his conversation with Richard Cœur de Lion, Joachim expressed his belief that Antichrist was already born. But his attention was called to the statement in the Book of the Revelation that Satan would be bound for a thousand years before the final battle against Gog and Magog. This, however, did not disturb Joachim's exegesis. The thousand years, he explained, did not mean a thousand, but "thousand" was mentioned because "*millennarius numerus perfectissimus est et maximam plenitudinem designat annorum.*" Joachim was neither the first nor the last to bend exegesis to suit the occasion. He was sweet-natured and begged to have a kindly hand

<sup>1</sup> About 1220 a clerk of Spire, whose austerity subsequently led him to join the Franciscans, was saved only by the interposition of Conrad, afterwards Bishop of Hildesheim, from being burned as a heretic because his preaching led certain women to lay aside their vanities of apparel and behave with humility. Henry C. Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, i, 87.

extended to him if in any of his writings he had erred.<sup>1</sup> He has the dignity which looks on death calmly and welcomes it: "Not only is death not to be feared, but one is on all accounts to hasten toward it."<sup>2</sup>

The great claim of Joachim, however, to be remembered is that he hit upon the fact; that which was the chief characteristic of his system is in reality the centre and essence of religion — the dominance of the spirit. When we spell Spirit with a capital and put a definite article before it, we limit the range of its thought by relegating it to theology or eschatology. But that spirit is the central power in personality, binding man to man and man to God, is what the world is slowly but with increasing conviction coming to perceive. Knowledge of the facts of the world, even the recognition of a personal power behind these facts, a Creator, may be independent of any attitude of soul, whether attraction or repulsion. There need necessarily be no outgoing of welcome on the part of the individual toward the universe, and therefore no essential unity with it, no allegiance toward its inmost law. One in such a condition is, in Joachim's phrase, living in the era of God the Father; it is primitive motives which dominate him.

<sup>1</sup> "Ita vos mihi manum porrigatis, quatenus si in hoc aut aliis aut opusculis meis erravi sicut homo."

<sup>2</sup> "Non solum mors fugienda non est, verum etiam ad eam modis omnibus accelerandum est."

But one may recognize God as expressed not only in the material world which He has created, but in humanity; preëminently in humanity in its highest development. God once embodied in a human being as much of Himself as humanity is capable of expressing. This historic incarnation is, therefore, a centre to which all succeeding ages must look back. It becomes the object of the world's worship, which must necessarily be developed through organizations and institutions and ritual and ecclesiasticism. The Church becomes the protective shell enclosing its pearl, the worship of Jesus. That which especially differentiates this epoch from the preceding is that it involves a motion and therefore an attitude of soul. The soul looks toward the central figure of the ages with wonder, reverence, worship, affection, the desire for imitation. One gives himself. This may bring the soul into close intimacy with Christ. Yet, curiously enough, it was not the character of Jesus or his teachings that had been chiefly dwelt upon since his death, so much as his position, his relation to God as Son, agent, mediator, to man as intercessor, judge, founder of a Church. This tended to magnify his official position and obscure personal relationship with him. In any case, the soul which was animated by the moving force of this era was faced toward the past, as are those to-day whose motto is "Back to Jesus!"

It was not only the corruption of the Church that



made Joachim and other devout souls of his day declare that a new era must come in; it was their conviction that there was a closer relation to Christ than that of worshipping him as a historic being. Such a relation would consist not so much in believing his words or obeying his commands as in being filled with his spirit. The attitude which Jesus held toward men and toward God was the very centre of his being, and it could become the centre of every man's being as well. When the theologians interpreted Jesus' saying, "I and my Father are one," as referring to a metaphysical unity, they emptied it of practical value; but when understood as a unity of will, of affections, of moral judgment, it becomes illuminative and potent. It is a reality to-day for many an experienced Christian. For years he has practised the ordinances of religion — church-going, Bible-reading, daily devotions. But in time they cease to feed to the full his soul. He practises them less because he cries out, "My soul is athirst for God, for the living God." He turns inward and upward; his thoughts fly Godward continually. The two walk together in the way because they are agreed. It is not so much that he has abandoned the first and second eras as that they have done their educative work and led him on into the third era. They are with him still, just as the alphabet and the multiplication table are the unconscious foundations of his thinking. The higher stages do not

supersede the lower; they presuppose them. The three stages symbolized by Joachim's three eras must be present in every full Christian life. It is the joy of young lovers to say to each other, "I love you!" It is the joy of old lovers to have the consciousness of mutual love pass so fully into unconsciousness that it has become part of the atmosphere they breathe, on which they reckon without so much as a reassuring glance. So when the soul has long known and lived with God, He has become an inseparable part of its life. They are one in the unity of the spirit. A pious German cobbler of old time used to offer before going to bed his daily and only prayer: "All is as ever, Lord, between Thee and me!"

It was the great discovery of the first Day of Pentecost that the spirit of Jesus was in reality Jesus himself; so that his disciples need not go forth feeling bereaved of their Master, but might have the conviction that for all time, wherever there was his spirit, Jesus, their loved Master, was himself with them. They need not think, because they could not see him, that they were without him. The Lord and the Spirit were one.<sup>1</sup> This gave new life to their depressed hearts, and the Christian Church came into being, founded on a living Christ. It has been this discovery that has brought comfort to many a

<sup>1</sup> II Cor., iii, 17.

mourning heart, which has turned from gazing into an open grave with the consoling assurance, "He is not here; he is risen;" since living in the spirit of the dear one who has gone is in reality living still with him. It was this which in the early Church made the possession of the Spirit the test of a Christian. When St. Paul comes to Ephesus and asks the disciples he finds there, "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?" and is answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit," he holds up his hands in surprise and amazement. "Unto what then were ye baptized?"<sup>1</sup> He cannot conceive how one can be a Christian who has not the spirit of Christ.

This truth we are to-day coming more fully to recognize. It is not profession which constitutes a Christian, not membership in any church, not the holding of any set of opinions, not even by itself uprightness of life; it is the possession of the spirit of Christ. One may have all knowledge and all power, but without this spirit he will be but as sounding brass or a tinkling symbol; with it, he may be poor and ignorant but yet one of the mighty of the earth. It is the lack of this spirit that breeds war; and, as Joachim and the present-day statesmen declare, it is only the coming of a different spirit that can make and preserve peace.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xix, 2, 3.

The conviction that it is the spirit of Christ that constitutes a Christian sheds an illuminating judgment on those many characters which regard themselves as non-Christians because they do not accept the historic Jesus, but which yet are moved by his spirit. They are the representatives of those men who did wonders in his name, that is, in the spirit of Christ, who yet did not attach themselves to his following, and whom he refused to allow his disciples to reject.<sup>1</sup> If they are not Christians in the narrow sense, they are such by the test which he established. So we find in the modern world many a one who holds himself aloof from historic religion who yet has much of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. And these, St. Paul declares, are the fruit of the spirit. Such a one Heine claims to be, as he replies to his love's fears that he is an unbeliever:

“Auch bezweiff’ ich, dass du glaubest —  
Was so rechter Glaube heisst —  
Glaubst wohl nicht an Gott der Vater,  
An den Sohn und heil’gen Geist.

Ach, mein Kindchen, schon als Knabe,  
Als ich sass auf Mutters Schoss,  
Glaubte ich an Gott den Vater,  
Der da waltet gut und gross.

. . . .

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark ix, 38 ff.

Als ich grosser wurde, Kindchen,  
Noch viel mehr begriff ich schon;  
Ich begriff und war vernünftig,  
Und ich glaubt' auch an den Sohn.

. . . . .

Jetzo, da ich ausgewachsen,  
Viel gelesen, viel gereist,  
Schwillt mein Herz, und ganz von Herzen  
Glaub' ich an den heil'gen Geist.

. . . . .

Tausend Ritter, wohlgewappnet,  
Hat der heil'ge Geist erwählt,  
Seinen Willen zu erfüllen;  
Und er hat sie muthbeseelt.

. . . . .

Nun, so schau mich an, mein Kindchen,  
Küsse mich, und schaue dreist;  
Denn ich selber bin ein solcher  
Ritter von dem heil'gen Geist.<sup>1</sup>

The Hebrew prophets, from Amos to the Seer of the Apocalypse saw profoundly and truly into the relations of God and man. When they came, however, to predict the events in which these relations would be embodied, they were often quite mistaken. So the Great Prophet, as Joachim was called in his day, depicted the kingdom of the spirit in terms which were narrow, puerile, and impossible. Yet his vision was true and profound of the march of the ages, culminating in the supremacy of the spirit of Jesus in the hearts of men, therefore in their actions,

<sup>1</sup> H. Heine, *Buch der Lieder*, "Berg-Idylle," 2.

and therefore in their institutions. The world would then be independent of external authority, being at one with God. It was the utopia which the author of the Book of the Revelation had seen when he beheld Jerusalem the New coming down in splendor from heaven where it had always dwelt in ideal, and becoming established on earth. Neither his dream nor Joachim's has yet been fully realized. But out of such dreams comes ultimately the glorious reality.



### III

#### ANGELUS SILESIUS

#### A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MYSTIC

**D**URING the last quarter-century more investigation than ever before has been going on into the unconscious activities of the human mind, or, as the investigators have preferred to call it, the subconscious mind. This has led, in psychology, to the study of apparitions and the various forms of telepathy, and in religion to a revival of Quietism. Religious bodies as far from Quakerism as the Episcopal Church are holding retreats for meditation, silent prayer, "the practice of the presence of God." The exclusion of worldly thought is pointed to as the means for the opening of the soul to the incoming of the Divine; and some are following the Mystic Way through its steps of Purgation, Illumination, and Ecstasy, to its goal of absorption into God in the Unitive Life.

This revived interest at the present time in mysticism is not surprising. For in an age which is devoted to efficiency and moved largely by machinery, when thought is subordinated to action and the quality most highly prized is power, there will always be those who turn away in sadness and disgust

from the rush of effort, and seek to find God by walking in the garden in the cool of the day; who adjust themselves to receiving, confident that from all sides the universe will pour its wealth into them if they do but furnish capacity for reception. They turn to those who in the midst of their strenuous activities are distrustful of any attainment except through effort, and say,

Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum  
Of things forever speaking,  
That nothing of itself will come,  
But we must still be seeking?

It was when the might of paganism was asserting itself under Diocletian against Christianity that the Fayoum was filled by St. Anthony and his monks. Meister Eckart, Tauler, and Ruysbroeck lived in a world busy with petty wars and petty politics. And it was in 1624, shortly after the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, that Johann Schefler, afterwards known as Angelus Silesius, was born in Silesia at Breslau, or perhaps at Glatz. He is less known than his fourteenth-century predecessors, or even than his master, Jakob Boehme; but he is interesting for the completeness with which he represents the positions of mysticism and for the daring with which he accepts the conclusions of its logic. Our busy age may well find a lesson in him. After reading his "*Cherubinischer Wandersmann*," one is inclined to say, as of *The Apocalypse*, "Seal not the

sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand."

He was a Lutheran by birth and education, and took to studying medicine at Strasburg, Padua, Leyden, and Amsterdam, with strong interests also in theology and poetry. After taking his doctor's degree in philosophy and medicine at Padua, he became, in 1649, court physician to the strongly Lutheran Duke Sylvius Nimrod at Oels in Würtemberg. He remained here, however, only three years, and then returned to Breslau. He found the ecclesiastical atmosphere in both places uncongenial. The early glow of the Reformation had given place to the acrimonies and hair-splittings of Protestant scholasticism. The Lutheran was bitter against the Calvinist and the Calvinist against the Lutheran, and both against the Zwinglian; and the bitterness of all against one another was often greater than against their common enemy, Rome. Ever since the Psalmist hesitated to announce the message which had brought light to his soul through fear that it would offend the devout, and warned himself — "If I say, 'I will speak thus,' behold, I should offend against the generation of Thy children" — through all the ages, the bitterly pious ecclesiastic, narrowly zealous for his own type of orthodoxy, has been the strongest agency in turning men away from religion. And men of this type abounded, both at the duke's court and in Silesia. Jakob Boehme, who died in the year in

which Scheffler was born, had been browbeaten and silenced for five years by an aggressive clerical guardian of Protestant orthodoxy in Silesia; and a half-century later Duke Sylvius's court preacher fell foul of the court physician. Protestantism, as Scheffler met it, was unlovely. Its emphasis upon doctrine, its straining at the gnat of conformity while swallowing the camel of un-Christlikeness, its suspicion of good works, and the coldness with which it regarded that immediate union with God which its own son, Boehme, had claimed, all combined with the unattractiveness of those who were its representatives to turn Scheffler from it.

There are people of whom we say, "They are good, but —"; and that "but" is like Pharaoh's lean kine, which devoured all the fat kine that were before them. So it was with those who to Scheffler stood for Protestantism; and on June 12, 1653, he abandoned it and entered the Roman Catholic Church. He had the zeal of the new convert; he would shake off the very dust of Protestantism from his feet. And so he adopted a new name. It had been his growing interest in mysticism which had helped in bringing him into his new surroundings. He took, consequently, for a kind of godfather a Spanish mystic of the sixteenth century, Johannes de Angelis, and borrowing his name, called himself Johannes Angelus. But as there was a contemporary Protestant doctor of theology by that name, he could not risk the

contamination of being confused with him, and he therefore appended the distinguishing adjective "Silesius," from the province of his birth, and he was known thereafter as Johannes Angelus Silesius.

He must previously have gained some distinction; for in less than a year after his conversion the Austrian Emperor, Frederick III, conferred on him the title of court physician. It was in this case only a title, the position carrying no duties and no income, but giving him the standing of a distinguished person and shielding him from the annoyances which his ecclesiastical change might involve. For seven years now he devoted himself to the study of dogmatics, and to perhaps composing, certainly publishing, his two chief poetical works. The first, appearing in 1657, had the title, "Geistreiche Sinn- und Schlussreime." This title was changed in the second edition to "Johannis Angeli Silesii Cherubinischer Wandersmann. Geistreiche Sinn- und Schlussreime zur göttlichen Beschaulichkeit anleitende." A second poem, or collection of poems, which appeared almost at once, showing that it had been composed before the publication of the first, was headed "Heilige Seelenlust, oder geistliche Hirtenlieder der in ihren Jesum verliebten Psyche; gesungen von Johann Angelo Silesio und von Herrn Georgio Josepho mit ausbündig schönen Melodien geziert."

In 1651 he entered the Franciscan Order and was

consecrated priest. His prominence in the affairs of the Church in Breslau led some of his former Protestant associates to circulate scurrilous songs, attacking him. He shortly afterwards replied in a pamphlet, in which he ascribed the recent victories of the Turks to a judgment of God for the secession of the Protestants from the Church of Rome. The Lutheran theologians were naturally not inclined to this view, and several prominent among them replied; and so began an unedifying controversy, with all the polemic heat, the sharpness of tongue and personal vilification, which the time regarded as proper in discussion. It is always easier to set a dog barking than to stop him by the soundest arguments. In twelve years Scheffler published fifty-five blasts against the Protestants, bitter as aloes but without their wholesomeness. One can readily see how the arm of even so doughty a champion might by that time have grown weary, and why he gradually grew tired of making faces. Many of his Catholic friends too were not altogether pleased at having him as their representative. He was persuaded to retire from active conflict, and was allowed to choose the chief smooth stones out of the brook with which he had slain his Philistines and publish them under the title "*Ecclesiologia, bestehend in 39 verschiedenen auserwählten Traktätlein.*" He had been a person of importance in the State as well as the Church; for in 1664 he had been appointed marshal and



counsellor to the Prince-Bishop of Breslau, a position which gave weight to the polemics in which he was engaged. But the slackening of his polemical ardor coincided with the death of his friend Sebastian, the Prince-Bishop, and in 1671 he resigned his offices and retired to the monastery of St. Matthias in Breslau. Here for six years he was occupied in editing his works and communing with his soul. He apparently never saw the opposition between the two, or felt it strange that one whose ideal was expressed in the popular hymn,

Ruhe ist das beste Gut  
Das mann haben kann,

should find his great interest and chief occupation in the hot activities of acrimonious polemics.

Just after the publication, in 1677, of his "Ecclesiologia," the arsenal of his munitions of war, he died. His conviction that to one spiritually minded the things of the flesh, including pain, are nothing —

Mensch, bist du Gott getreu, und meinst Ihn allein,  
So wird die grösste Noth ein Paradies dir seyn.<sup>1</sup>  
(I, 131.)

this conviction was put to the test by a severe and painful illness. To him, as to many another Christian, the process of being unclothed was one in which

<sup>1</sup> Art thou but true to God, seeking no other gain,  
Thou wilt find Paradise even in the sharpest pain.

The numerals refer to the Books of the Cherubinischer Wandersmann.

he groaned, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon. Yet while one hand remained entangled in earthly things, the other with its firm grip on heaven was ever lifting him upward.

I have spoken of his poetry as comprised in two volumes. He published a third in 1675, entitled "*Johannis Angeli Silesii Beschreibung der vier letzten Dinge.*" It is a vivid portrayal of death, the Judgment Day, the eternal pains of the damned, and the eternal joys of the saved, which he hoped would convert the impenitent. But, like most sulphurous whiffs of the atmosphere of hell, the flavor of brimstone repels one from the preacher rather than from the place, or else is discounted as unreal and passed by with derision, while the joys ascribed to heaven are pallid and unattractive to warm-blooded humanity. There is hardly any kinship between this attempt to get the accounts of the world ready for the Day of Judgment, and the "*Heilige Seelenlust*" or the "*Geistreiche Schlussreime.*" The "*Cherubinischer Wandersmann*" did not travel into this grim country.

The "*Heilige Seelenlust*," whose extended title I have already given, is a mild decoction of Solomon's Song. The love of the soul, or psyche, for Jesus is set forth in the sensuous, sometimes sensual, terms of physical passion which have been not uncommon in minds where ecstasy has followed meditation. Of the two hundred and five poems which

the volume contains, most are to a modern reader simply dull. The expression of love and longing rarely rises above the commonplace. Of the five books into which it is divided, the first three form an orderly whole. The Saviour is accompanied on his journey through life from his birth to his ascension, and the soul exults in union with him here and hereafter. The other two books, published later and separately, contain poems on the spiritual life but unrelated to one another.

The "Heilige Seelenlust" is a mine in which the compilers of hymn-books have dug. Heinrich Muller's "Geistliche Seelenmusik," which appeared in 1669, only two years after the publication of Scheffler's book, contained thirty-one hymns taken from it. In the course of the next half-century half a dozen hymn-books acknowledged their debt to it, and sometimes the debt was large; as in case of the "Freylinghausen Gesangbuch," which included fifty-two out of Scheffler's two hundred and five pieces. The hymnologists of the Pietistic Movement found Scheffler's ardent commonplaces to their taste, and borrowed them even more fully. In the more recent Evangelical hymn-books some still retain their place. Among these are:

Liebe, die du mich zum Bilde (II, 338),  
Ich will dich lieben, meine Stärke (I, 30),  
Mir nach spricht Christus unser Held (V, 580),  
Ich danke dir für deinen Tod (I, 190),  
Jesus ist der schönste Nahm (I, 103).

Some have been translated into English, or rather paraphrased; the first of those above mentioned by Miss Winkworth, beginning,

O Love, who formedst me to wear  
The image of Thy Godhead here;

and the second by John Wesley,

Thee will I love, my strength and tower.

Miss Winkworth has also translated

Morgenstern du finstren Nacht (I, 80).  
(Morning Star, in darksome night.)

Other translations are the following:

Komm Liebsten komm in deinen Garten (III, 289).  
(Make my heart a garden fair. — Miss Cox).

Jesus ist die schönste Nam (I, 103).  
(Jesus is the highest name. — A. T. Russell).

Wo wiltu hin weils Abends ist? (II, 217),  
(Where wilt thou go, since night draws near? — A. Crull).

The hymns of Angelus Silesius have kept his name alive in Germany. But the world there and elsewhere has been discovering a weightier ground of remembrance in his first volume — “Geistliche Sinn- und Schlussreime,” or, as it is commonly called, from the addition to the title in the second edition, the “Cherubinischer Wandersmann.” Man, so the title would indicate, is but a traveller here below, with no abiding place; but through union with God he acquires a super-earthly life and lasting peace, like that of the heaven-inhabiting cherubim. This union of opposites, the earthly and the heavenly, is the

ground-tone running throughout the poem. Perhaps it should hardly be called a poem, since that implies more or less unity. The theme on which he is engaged is so great and manifold that endeavoring to reduce it to system would be like attempting to drive one of the beasts of The Revelation, with seven heads and ten horns, with each head trying to go its own way. So he lets it take its way, and gives us here a collection of aphorisms, chiefly couplets in Alexandrine verse, having relation to the general theme but little to one another. To attempt therefore to read many of them at a time is like riding in a jolting cart over a rough road, and is unwise. They are rather to be treated in the way our Puritan forefathers took the Bible, when they bit off a verse or two in the morning and chewed on them throughout the day. The mastication of Schefler's verses is not facilitated by beauty of style, for they are so condensed that they must dispense with amplifications and embellishments. To compare him with his immediate predecessors in English poetry: he has no kinship with the beauty-loving school of Spenser; he has much in common with the hard-thinking, close-knit phraseology of the school of Donne. Moreover, he is not a master of technique; he is more intent upon matter than manner, and is often put to bald shifts to subdue his verse. He has his favorite tags which help him to conquer a refractory line: "Mensch, glaube mir," "ich weiss,"

"kann ich kühnlich sagen," "für und für." These often come in handy when he has said his say but is compelled by the exigence of his metre to fill out the required number of feet. Many of his verses are commonplace. Many are commonplace to us because they were revelations in his day. But there is in many of them a profundity of insight, a depth of feeling, a passion for God, and above all a daring in boldly claiming the conclusions which the logic of his theology carries, which make one who has known him unable to forget him. And occasionally he stumbles into beauty. There is in these couplets a kind of fragrant perfume, such as Isaac detected in his son's garments: "The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed."

His fundamental position is that God is love. But love means sharing, sharing one's best, sharing all one's best. And one's best is ever himself. God therefore is for ever endeavoring to pour Himself into us, to give us all of Himself that we are capable of receiving.

Gott gibet Niemand nichts; Er stehet allen frey,  
Dass Er, wo du nur Ihn so willst, ganz deine sey.

(I, 21.)<sup>1</sup>

Gott liebet mich allein; nach mir ist Ihm so bange  
Dass Er auch stirbt vor Angst, weil ich Ihm nicht anhange.

(III, 37.)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> God thrusts Himself on none; He stands for all men free.  
So that, whate'er thou wilt, He may be unto thee.

<sup>2</sup> God loves the special Me. Anxious for me He is;  
So that He would expire of grief, were I not His.



Such bountifulness on God's part must result in endowing the soul with all the amplitude of God's own nature.

Ich bin so gross als Gott; Er ist als ich so klein.  
Er kann nich über mich, ich unter Ihm nicht seyn.  
(I, 10.) <sup>1</sup>

This union with God results in the annihilation of time and place and makes eternity present.

Nicht du bist in dem Ort; der Ort, der ist in dir.  
Wirfst du hinaus, so steht die Ewigkeit schon hier.  
(I, 185.) <sup>2</sup>

Zeit ist wie Ewigkeit und Ewigkeit wie Zeit,  
So du nur selber nicht machst einen Unterscheid.  
(I, 47.) <sup>3</sup>

Mensch, wo du deinen Geist schwingst über Ort und Zeit,  
So kannst du jeden Blick seyn in der Ewigkeit.  
(I, 12.) <sup>4</sup>

Both heaven and hell are annihilated.

Wo in der Hölle nicht kann ohne Hölle leben,  
Der hat sich noch nicht ganz dem Höchsten übergeben.  
(I, 39.) <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> God is as small as I; I am as great as He.

He cannot above me, nor I beneath Him be.

<sup>2</sup> Thou dwellest not in space, but space, it is in thee.

Cast it out, and already is eternity.

<sup>3</sup> Eternity is as time, time as eternity.

If they are otherwise, the difference is in thee.

<sup>4</sup> Lift up thy soul o'er time and space. The spirit's power

Shall give thee even here eternity each hour.

<sup>5</sup> He who in hell itself without hell cannot live,

To his own Best himself as yet he does not give.

Mensch, wird das Paradies in dir nicht erstlich seyn,  
 So glaube mir gewiss, du kommest nimmer drein.  
 (I, 295.)<sup>1</sup>

The efficient agent of the Divine judgments is therefore transferred from without to within the soul.

Der Himmel ist in dir und auch der Höllen Qual.  
 Was du erkienst und willst, das hast du überall.  
 (I, 145.)<sup>2</sup>

Was klagst du über Gott? Du selbst verdamme dich.  
 Er möcht' es ja nicht thun, das glaube sicherlich.  
 (I, 137.)<sup>3</sup>

This identification of the Divine judgments with the inner workings of the soul has become in the last half-century familiar to us. But it was by no means familiar to the men of Scheffler's day. The reign of law was then viewed as far more limited in range than since the great rise of scientific knowledge in the last century. To the thought of the men of the seventeenth century events not the direct result of human effort are from the arbitrary will and imposing hand of God. He reaches down from the skies and gives blessings here and punishments there. He takes this man to heaven and sends that one to hell, and there is no telling beforehand

<sup>1</sup> If with thee Paradise exist not first within,  
 Then, trust me well, thou ne'er wilt come therein.

<sup>2</sup> Heaven is in thee, and also in thee is hell's pain.  
 Whate'er thou wilt, whate'er thou choosest, thou dost gain.

<sup>3</sup> But why complain of God, when it is thou alone  
 Canst ever damn thyself? He sentences no one.

what will be the fate of either. Silesius himself, in his "Sinnliche Beschreibung," revels in depicting heaven and hell as localities, and describing their pleasures and pains as poured upon the soul from outside itself. This is the conventional method of religious speech. But into his contemporaries, trained to look thus to a future state for the assessment of moral values, Silesius drove a deeper thought when he proclaimed that the character of the soul not only determines its status but is its status.

Wie magst du was begehren? Du selber kannst allein  
Der Himmel und die Erd' und tausend Engel seyn.  
(II, 149.)<sup>1</sup>

Not that he was the first to make this discovery, for it was but the development of the Johannine thought, "This is life eternal — to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou has sent"; "This is damnation — that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." It was but the consequence of the Pauline thought, in which Christ not only speaks to the soul, not only speaks in the soul, but is identical with the true condition of the soul itself. Silesius, however, was one of the first to proclaim in modern times that the soul is itself the agent in establishing automatically what had been regarded as externally imposed judgments of God.

<sup>1</sup> Wherefore desirest thou aught? since thou thyself mayst even  
Be earth and myriad angels and the very heaven.

In carrying out to its full range the conclusion which the logic of the situation authorizes, Angelus Silesius, like Isaiah, is very bold. If God gives Himself to man, then man, in so far, becomes God. Indeed, Silesius in his joyous flight is not always particular to put in the "in so far." He too will declare "I and my Father are one."

Mensch, was du liebst, in das wirst du verwandelt werden;  
Gott wirst du, liebst du Gott, und Erde, liebst du Erden.

(V, 200.) <sup>1</sup>

Ein grundgelassner Mensch ist ewig frey und Ein.  
Kann auch ein Unterscheid an ihm und Gotte seyn?

(II, 141.) <sup>2</sup>

Wer ist als wär' er nicht, und wär' er nie geworden,  
Der ist (o Seligkeit!) zu lauter Gotte worden.

(I, 92.) <sup>3</sup>

In the preface to the "Cherubinischer Wandersmann," however, he explains what he means by this oneness with God. It is not strange that he felt the necessity of explanation if such terms as *Vergottung* and *Gottwerdung* were to pass the ecclesiastical censor. Even with his explanation it seems remarkable that the book received the "Approbatio" of the Jesuit judge and the "Imprimatur" of the Rector

<sup>1</sup> Whate'er thou lovest, Man, that too become thou must;  
God, if thou lovest God; dust, if thou lovest dust.

<sup>2</sup> One who is freed from earth has wholeness, liberty.  
How betwixt him and God can any difference be?

<sup>3</sup> Who is as he were not, as he had never been,  
Has become very God. O blessedness serene!

of the University of Vienna. Here is his bidding for orthodoxy:

Inasmuch as the following rhymes contain many unusual paradoxes or contradictory expressions and many profound conclusions not familiar to everyone in regard to the mystery of the Godhead — as, for example, union with God or with the Divine being, the Divine likeness, deification, becoming God, and the like — expressions to which, on account of the condensed style, one might easily ascribe a reprehensible sense or give an evil meaning, it is necessary to warn the reader in advance.

It must be understood once for all that the author's meaning is in no case that the human soul should or can lose its created character and become changed through deification into God or His uncreated being. For though God is almighty, this He cannot do — and if He could, He would not be God — to make a creature God by nature and essence. So Tauler says in his spiritual instructions: "Since the Most High cannot make us gods by nature, for this belongs to Him alone, He has made us gods by grace, so that we may have blessedness, joy, and one and the same kingdom with Him in everlasting love." He means by this that the favored holy soul may attain such close union with God and His Divine being as to be penetrated by it through and through, transformed, united with it and made one; so that, when men see it, they will see and recognize in it no other than God. It will be as it is in the life eternal, when the soul is wholly swallowed up by the brightness of the Divine majesty. It will indeed attain such com-

plete likeness to God as to be through grace what God is by nature, and thus in a sense may rightly be called, as in these verses, a god in God.<sup>1</sup>

It was a reversal of the usual order of progress, according to which the heresy of one generation becomes the orthodoxy of the next, that such opinions could be approved by ecclesiastical authority in 1657, and in 1687 for holding the same opinions Molinos could be condemned to the dungeons of the Inquisition.

In setting forth the means by which this union with God is to be attained, Silesius emphasizes strongly the central doctrine of mysticism — dualism. The Divine and the human are different; more than that, they are mutually exclusive; the finite is the opposite of the infinite, so that the more of one, the less of the other. The only way then by which they can come together is by one ceasing to be itself. As it is unthinkable that God can be the one to change and approach man, it must be on man's side that the approach is made. Man must empty himself of all that is characteristic of humanity; not only of positive sin, but of all desire, will, endeavor, which in this view become sin. He must become nothing; and the more completely he succeeds in this self-annihilation, the more completely he becomes one with God. There was in the seven-

<sup>1</sup> *Der Cherubinischer Wandersmann* (ed. Sulzbach, 1829); Vorrede, pp. vi, vii.



teenth century no study of comparative religion to point out to Silesius his kinship with Buddhism, and he had probably never heard of Plotinus. His spiritual ancestors were Meister Eckart, Tauler, and most directly, as I have said, Boehme, though he does not care to mention him after his own conversion to Romanism. His was the world-old line of thought which dwells on the otherness of God, and which meets us to-day in the Roman Mass, in popular theories of the Atonement, and in the revivalist's song,

O to be nothing, nothing!  
 Only to lie at His feet,  
 A broken and empty vessel  
 For the Master's uses meet!

Silesius is continually pressing home the need of this self-emptying and of thorough-goingness in it, and describing the blissful condition which results. For this he has many names, — *Abgeschiedenheit*, *Abgestorbenheit*, *Vernichtigkeit*, *Ledigkeit*, *Gelassenheit*, *Heiligkeit*, *Gleichheit*, *Seligkeit*, *Friede*, *Ruhe*. When the process is complete and one has reached *ganzliche Verneinung des Willens*, he has attained *Vergottung*.

Die Heiligen sind darum mit Gottes Ruh umfassen  
 Und haben Seligkeit, weil sie nach nichts verlangen.  
 (I, 169.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> They who are held in God's sweet peace are blest in this —  
 That they have no desire; therefore they dwell in bliss.

Mensch, so du etwas liebst, so liebst du nichts fürwahr.  
 Gott is nicht diess und das; drum lass das Etwas gar.  
 (I, 44.)<sup>1</sup>

Nicht bringt dich über dich, als die Vernichtigkeit.  
 Wer mehr vernichtig ist, der hat mehr Göttlichkeit.  
 (II, 140.)<sup>2</sup>

Geh aus, so geht Gott ein; stirbt dir, so lebst du Gott;  
 Sey nicht, so ist es Er; thu nichts, so g'schieht's Gebot.  
 (II, 136.)<sup>3</sup>

Logic again drives him. "Then if desire is evil, you must not desire even God." "True," replies he sturdily:

Ein wahrer armer Mensch steht ganz auf nichts gericht.  
 Gibt Gott ihm gleich sich selbst, ich weiss, er nimmt Ihn  
 nicht.  
 (II, 148.)<sup>4</sup>

Even Christ had to conform to this rigid law of will-lessness:

Auch Christus, wär in Ihm ein kleiner eigner Wille,  
 Wie selig Er auch ist, Mensch! glaube mir, Er fiele.  
 (V, 32.)<sup>5</sup>

Like every profound thinker, Silesius does not balk at the necessity for holding opposites. Consist-

<sup>1</sup> Thou lovest not aright, lov'st thou aught here below.  
 God is not This nor That; so let the Somethings go.

<sup>2</sup> Nought raises thee above thyself like nothingness.  
 God is the more in thee as thou thyself art less.

<sup>3</sup> Go out, and God comes in; die, God thy soul will fill.  
 Be not, and there is He; do nought, He has His will.

<sup>4</sup> One who is truly poor, no compromise can make.  
 Should God give him Himself, even this he would not take.

<sup>5</sup> Christ himself, if he had an atom of self-will,  
 However holy too, would not have been Christ still.

ency is not to be attained by an "either, or." He may choose to hold both or neither. He is like a dog hunting. One who looks from a distance might think directness of aim was the last thing to be ascribed to him, as he turns here and there and forward and backward; yet all the time, though his path is crooked, his course is straight on the scent. So Silesius, though he has declared that the human will must be wholly dead, yet declares also that it is the will which preserves each in his condition:

Der Will macht dich verlör'n, der Will macht dich gefunden,  
Der Will der macht dich frey, gefesselt und gebunden.  
(VI, 82.) <sup>1</sup>

Gott kann schon ewiglich nicht die Verdammten finden,  
Weil sie stets durch ihr'n Will'n vor Ihm in Pfuhl ver-  
schwinden.  
(VI, 81.) <sup>2</sup>

It is not God's decree but only the Devil's own perverse will that keeps him a devil; and here Silesius is even more hopeful for the lord of hell than Robert Burns:

Die Sonne muss ihr Licht all'n, die es woll'n, gewähren.  
Der Teufel wird erleucht, wollt' er zu Gott sich kehren.  
(VI, 40.) <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thy will, it makes thee lost; thy will, it makes thee found;  
Thy will, it makes thee free, or fast in fetters bound.

<sup>2</sup> God cannot find a wretch deep in the pool of hell  
Because it is his settled will therein to dwell.

<sup>3</sup> The sun, on all who turn to him, must brightly burn.  
The Devil's face would shine, if he to God would turn.

Gott ist dem Belzebub nah wie dem Seraphin.  
Es kehrt nur Belzebub den Rücken gegen Ihn.

(V, 72.)<sup>1</sup>

Again, while he maintains that the finite must be absorbed in the infinite, he insists that this does not abolish personality. And here, in spite of startling expressions, he parts company from the thorough-going mystic, who walks straight up to a void Nirvana. But what Silesius welcomes is not annihilation but absorption, when, in presence of the glorious Infinite, all other beings are drowned, like stars in day. Personality, he maintains, persists after death.

Der Geist lebt in sich selbst. Gebricht ihm gleich das Licht,  
(Wie ein Verdammter wird) so stirbet er doch nicht.

(II, 160.)<sup>2</sup>

Ich glaube keinen Tod. Sterb' ich gleich alle Stunden,  
So hab ich jedesmal ein besser Leben funden.

(I, 30.)<sup>3</sup>

Ich sag, es stirbet nichts; nur dass ein ander Leben,  
Auch selbst das peinliche, wird durch den Tod gegeben.

(I, 36.)<sup>4</sup>

Such union is so close that it becomes indissoluble; God Himself cannot tear it apart. The particu-

<sup>1</sup> God is both to the Fiend and to the Seraph near.  
But the Fiend turns his back on God, and will not hear.

<sup>2</sup> Spirit must ever live. It may in darkness lie,  
As do the damned; yet even then it cannot die.

<sup>3</sup> There is no death, I hold. Should I die every hour,  
Yet every hour there is a better life in store.

<sup>4</sup> Nothing that is, can die. It is but life again  
That follows death, even though a life of fiercest pain.

lar becomes as necessary to the universal as the universal to the particular. I am essential to God.

Gott is mir Gott und Mensch; ich bin Ihm Mensch und Gott.  
Ich lösche seinen Durst, und Er hilft mir aus Noth.

(I, 224.) <sup>1</sup>

Wer Gott vereinigt ist, den kann Er nicht verdammen;  
Er stürze sich dann selbst mit ihm in Tod und Flammen.

(I, 97.) <sup>2</sup>

Ich weiss dass ohne mich Gott nicht ein Nun kann leben.  
Werd' ich zu nicht, Er muss von Noth den Geist aufgeben.

(I, 8) <sup>3</sup>

Gott mag nicht ohne mich ein einziges Würmlein machen.  
Erhalt Ich's nicht mit Ihm, so muss es stracks zukrachen.

(I, 96.) <sup>4</sup>

This abolition of distinctions which takes place in man and his relation to God, is the case with God also. He too, since He is infinite, can have neither passions nor parts; for these would constitute limitation. He is incomplex, of whom no affirmation can be made. The more He is known, the more He becomes unknowable.

<sup>1</sup> I find in God a man; I find in man a God.  
I slake His thirst, and He must needs help me, a clod.

<sup>2</sup> He who is joined to God can suffer no damnation;  
For God Himself would perish in His conflagration.

<sup>3</sup> Apart from me, I know God cannot live a minute.  
Should I leave life, He too could not continue in it.

<sup>4</sup> God without me cannot create a worm. If I  
Hold not with Him, it and creation's self would die.

Mensch, Gott gedenket nichts. Ja, wär'n in Ihm gedanken,  
So könnt Er hin und her, welch's Ihm nicht zusteht, wanken.

(V, 173.)<sup>1</sup>

Wir beten: es gescheh, mein Herr und Gott, dein Wille;  
Und sieh, Er hat nicht Will'; Er ist ein ew'ge Stille.

(I, 294.)<sup>2</sup>

Gott ist ein lauter Nichts; Ihn rührt kein Nun noch Hier.  
Je mehr du nach Ihm greifst, je mehr entwid Er dir.

(I, 25.)<sup>3</sup>

Silesius, however, is saved from the abyss of Quietism, the reducing of God to an unintelligible  $x$ , by his ebullient insistence upon the glories of God — His bountifulness, long-suffering, grace, love, will. These he persists in rejoicing in, regardless of the exigencies of thought which would forbid them. He is convinced that though the clouds of dialectic and the darkness of infinity are round about God, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. This conviction the Cherubinischer Wandersmann carries with him in all his travels.

Like all the mystics, Silesius holds that the knowledge of God comes not through the processes of the intellect, but through intuitive perception; it is a vision, not a conclusion. He echoes the Apostle's

<sup>1</sup> God thinks not. Had He thoughts, they must go here and yonder.

But it consists not with His changelessness to wander.

<sup>2</sup> "Thy will be done, O Lord my God!" we pray not well. He has no will, but in eternal calm must dwell.

<sup>3</sup> God is a simple Naught; He has nor Here nor Now. The more thou searchest Him, the less attainest thou.



declaration, "Knowledge puffeth up, but love up-buildeth."

Viel wissen blähet auf. Dem Geb' ich Lob und Preis,  
Der den Gekreuzigten in seine Seele weiss.

(V, 84.) <sup>1</sup>

Der nächste Weg zu Gott ist durch die Liebe Thür.  
Der Weg der Wissenschaft bringt dich gar langsam für.

(V, 320.) <sup>2</sup>

Halt an, mein Augustin; eh' du wirst Gott ergründen,  
Wird man das ganze Meer in einem Grüblein finden.

(IV, 22.) <sup>3</sup>

Of the path which leads to the knowledge of God he says with Isaiah, "A highway shall be there, even a way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. The wayfaring men though fools shall not err therein."

I have accused Scheffler of stumbling at times into telericity of expression or of thought or even into beauty. Perhaps passages like these may justify the accusation:

Stirb, ehe du noch stirbst, damit du nicht darfst sterben  
Wann du nun sterben sollst; sonst inöchtest du verderben.

(IV, 77.) <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Much knowledge puffs one up. Him rather I extol  
Who knows the Crucified abiding in his soul.

<sup>2</sup> The nearest way that leads to God is through love's gate.  
Who takes the way of knowledge, comes by far too late.

<sup>3</sup> Stay, Augustine; ere thou reducest God to rule,  
A man will find the whole of ocean in a pool.

<sup>4</sup> Die now before thou diest, that thou mayst not die  
When thou shalt die; else shalt thou die eternally.

Ein Kind, das auf der Welt nur eine Stunde bleibt,  
Das wird so alt als man Mathusalem beschreibt.

(II, 168.) <sup>1</sup>

In Gott ist alles Gott; ein einziges Würmelein  
Das ist in Gott so viel als tausend Gotte seyn.

(II, 243.) <sup>2</sup>

Die Seele die nichts sucht als eins mit Gott zu seyn,  
Die lebt in steter Ruh', und hat doch steter Pein.

(VI, 176.) <sup>3</sup>

Gott ist nicht alles nah. Die Jungfrau und das Kind,  
Die Zwei die sind's allein, die Gott's Gespielen sind.

(I, 296.) <sup>4</sup>

Die Ros' ist ohn Warum; sie blühet, weil sie blühet.  
Sie acht't nicht ihrer selbst, fragt nicht, ob man sie siehet.

(I, 289.) <sup>5</sup>

Mensch, suchst du Gott um Ruh', so ist dir noch nicht recht.  
Du suchest dich, nicht Ihn; bist noch nicht Kind, nur Knecht.

(I, 58.) <sup>6</sup>

Du klagst, die Creatur'n die bringen dich in Pein;  
Wie? müssen sie doch mir ein Weg zu Gotte seyn.

(II, 114.) <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A child who in the world lives but an hour, he  
Is old as e'er Methuselah was said to be.

<sup>2</sup> What is of God is God. A thousand Gods, I say,  
Might be; and yet a worm is God as much as they.

<sup>3</sup> The soul that only seeks oneness with God to attain  
Lives in perpetual peace, and has perpetual pain.

<sup>4</sup> Two there are close to God — not all to Him are near —  
The maiden and the child — these are God's playmates dear.

<sup>5</sup> The rose is without "Why?" It blows because it blows.  
It cares not for itself, nor if seen even knows.

<sup>6</sup> Seekest thou God for rest, thou hast thyself beguiled  
Thou seek'st thyself, not God; a servant, not a child.

<sup>7</sup> The creatures, thou lamentest, lead thy soul astray.  
Nay let them rather be for thee to God a way.

This last couplet proclaims Silesius no ascetic, and anticipates the exhortation of Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra:

All good things  
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now than flesh helps soul.

The Bible begins with a transcendent God, the world and all things therein made by a Creator outside it. The Bible ends — if the Fourth Gospel is the book latest in date — with an immanent God, one who mingles Himself with the winds that blow as they list and with the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart. But as religion has become more profound, it has sternly demanded the unity of God. It will not allow many gods; there can be but one. This just insistence upon monotheism, however, has often failed to learn an important lesson from polytheism — the lesson of the value of complexity. To the polytheist the multifarious agencies of the world, though not all from the same source, are yet all divine. He sees "an earth crammed with heaven and every common bush afire with God." The monotheist must draw a line between what he considers is proper to God and what is not; and the result is, on one side, a God all of a kind, and on the other side, a large part of the world without a God in it. Moreover, the more completely he raises God above the world, the more he removes Him from apprehension. Anything in Him which humanity could touch would be a derogation to his unique-

ness, and He therefore becomes not only solitary but unknowable, the  $x$  of a cosmic algebra. But monotheism may be saved from atheism by taking a hint from its sister polytheism and carrying it further. If the human mind demands both complexity and unity in God, then unity must itself be complex. And the moment the idea is apprehended, the mind exclaims in amazement at its own dulness, "Why, of course!" And then the instances come crowding in. Every government, so the modern world is perceiving, must include federated states; every complete family, both parents and children; every living body, nerves and muscles; every machine, wheels and shafts. Every union which is not such by cohesion only must be organic, its parts finding the ground of their being in the whole and the whole present in every part. Then, says the mind, jumping from earth to heaven, the infinite must include the finite; then they are not diverse, the finite the opposite of the infinite. Then the finite belongs of necessity to the infinite, and the infinite must have it, not out of kindness to the finite, but in the interest of its own infinity. But if the finite is that which is limited, does not this establish limitation in the very bosom of the infinite? Yes, and because it is established there, it is no bar to infinity. For then infinity exhibits itself, not as the unlimited, but as the self-limited. The finite then becomes that which is limited from without itself and the infinite that which is limited from within

itself; and at once the antagonisms of dualism and Angelus Silesius's paradox of the necessity of man to God disappear. God cannot exist without me any more than I can without God.

To exhibit such union the best magnifying glass is marriage.

For we have grown as part to part,  
One filling out the other's being;  
Implying each, like blood and heart;  
In each implied, like eyes and seeing.

Such closest union has amazed  
Our happy souls, its depths unfolding;  
And through it, awe-struck, we have gazed,  
God and His glory thus beholding.

We find it expressed more accurately and profoundly in Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and the Turtle":

So they loved, as love in twain  
Had the essence but in one;  
Two distincts, division none;  
Number there in love was slain.

Property was thus appalled,  
That the self was not the same;  
Single nature's double name  
Neither two nor one was called.

Reason, in itself confounded,  
Saw division grow together;  
To themselves yet either neither,  
Simple were so well compounded

That it cried, "How true a twain  
Seemeth this concordant one!"  
Love hath reason, reason none,  
If what parts can so remain.

The Bible is full of the thought that God needs man's aid in redeeming the world, a real need, the withholding of which will retard the redemptive process. Meroz is cursed because it came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty. And it was this interwovenness of God and man which formed the ground of Jesus' argument for immortality. It is sometimes regarded as a mere quibble that he should put forth the statement, "I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob," as proof that these persons were still living.<sup>1</sup> But the argument is sound. If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were united to God while on earth, they came to form part of His being; and if once they became a part of Him, they must be ever a part, unless they have ceased to be such as in character they were. For God cannot change, and unless they did, they are still component and therefore living in Him; for God is not the God of the dead but of the living. Angelus Silesius likens the presence of God in all that is His to the presence of the number one in all the other numbers:

Gleichwie die Einheit ist in einer jeden Zahl,  
So ist auch Gott der Ein' in Dingen überall.<sup>2</sup> (V, 3.)

And this insistence of the One in demanding its implications is the assurance of the permanence of the parts and therefore of personal immortality.

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. 22, 32.

<sup>2</sup> As numbers great or small the number One imply,  
So too is God the One in all things low or high.



This, this we know;  
For one must have its two,  
If two are one — foreseeing,  
Where thought can reach,  
Each soul will carry each  
Stamped in its inmost being.

For one means two, and two means four,  
And four means fifty million more;  
And fifty million stopped the sun  
Because they missed one little one.

God cannot rest in His eternal bliss  
Without each atom which was ever His.  
If thou in me and I in thee have grown  
And both in God, then all we three are one.

Many of the followers of mysticism have found peace in the great surrender it requires. When the tired mind gives up its problems, when the proud will bows itself, when the fierce passions cease their clamorous demands, then the soul feels itself lying without struggle and at rest in the arms of the infinite. Such a rest is indeed restful if it is temporary and partial. If it is thoroughgoing, it is death; for it is the annihilation of personality, and therefore a diminution of the glory of God. The Seer of the Apocalypse in his celestial vision once saw the voice of the place hushed; there was silence in heaven. But it was but for half an hour, and then the great chorus of praise and of judgment was resumed by angels and men.<sup>1</sup> If the doctrine of the complex infinite is true, God's glory consists not in the ab-

<sup>1</sup> Rev., 8, 1.

sence of other personalities but in their most numerous and fullest development. Each is not only an advertisement but an embodiment of Him. Let a man claim all knowledge as his right; let him sharpen his will till it is keen and firm; let him covet earnestly the best gifts; let him aim high — and it cannot be too high. It is thus that he will be “for the Master’s uses meet,” rather than by being “a broken and empty vessel.” The barren lifelessness of mysticism is not the peace of heaven.

Many of the most noted mystics have freed themselves from the deadening effect of its negations because to them these were only parts of a higher affirmation, and it has been the glory of the affirmation in which they have rejoiced. To abstain from any assertion about God because of a narrow conception of personality is one thing; to abstain, blinded with seeing, because He is so gloriously beyond all description, is another. To the higher mystics, therefore, mysticism has brought a wealth which persons of their temperament could probably have gained in no other way. Vistas open to them and far voices call. But the form of mysticism which has leavened popular religious thought — and this leaven is extensive — is pernicious through the establishment of a false ideal — the suppression of personality as the means of approach to God. It is this which is largely responsible for that erroneous supposition of those who know religion but little,

that it is feeble, joyless, measured by its abstentions, lacking in virility and power. Such a conception paralyzes effort; it does not hold up amplitude of life as the Christian's aim and right; it embalms a dead past. It refuses to follow the Psalmist when he declares, "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living." Such souls, though starting with a vision of the glories of God, through a mistaken response to it become narrower and feebler; like the rivers which instead of growing fuller and richer as they roll, become more and more shallow, until at last they are dried up and lost in barren wastes of sand.

I said that Silesius holds that knowledge of God comes not through the processes of the intellect but through intuitive perception. This is a fundamental position of the mystics, so fundamental that to many it seems almost their sole distinguishing characteristic. The knowledge of God is to them not understanding but vision, and therefore certainty. Ask them how they are sure of that "therefore," and they would perhaps ask in reply how you know that two and two are four. It is because it is; and this conviction flashes upon them with a clearness and intensity which are their own assurance. Such evidence can of course be valid for themselves alone. The "Why?" which would be the bridge between them and others, they cannot build. So, though the sight of their confident faith may be impressive to

a beholder, the grounds of it he must investigate for himself, for they cannot impart them. Yet this is not denying that these grounds may have validity for them. For the deepest intercourse between mind and mind is not limited by the senses but far transcends word or sight. The communications of the spirit are like the wind, of which "thou canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." Samuel Butler says of excogitation: "Great thoughts are not to be caught in this way. They must present themselves for capture of their own free will, or be taken with a little coyness only."<sup>1</sup> All the processes of life at their fullest must be unconscious; otherwise, like manners, they become vulgar. But it must be an unconsciousness which is positive, not negative; that is, which has passed through the stage of consciousness and which may, if need be, revert to it at any moment and feel its intellectual base. The skilled pianist in the midst of his sonata does not think of the notes or fingers; but if a hitch occurs, he can stop and adjust the one to the other. Wealth is measured by the things one takes as matters of course. To the poor man, having a dinner is a ground for congratulation; the rich man accepts it as a part of the unthought-about order of things. If one is apprehensive how this or that will affect his friend, the friendship has not reached its height: "He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

<sup>1</sup> *God the Known and God the Unknown*, chap. IV, sect. 2.

Consciousness is a necessary step to the fullest development, but it is not itself the highest step.

Science is telling us to-day of a means of intercourse of which, while she confesses her ignorance what it is, she yet seems to have confidence that it is. This power of second sight, thought-transference, telepathy, which gives the key to faith-healing and many other apparent miracles, when it comes to our fuller knowledge will undoubtedly explain much of that immediate intercourse between minds which now seems mysterious, or often merely imaginary. But if it is possible for thought to pass from one mind to another by intuitive perception, there is surely no field fitter for its exercise than between the soul and God. Ask a soul so engaged, "How do you know that it is God at the other end of the telephone and not your own fancies merely?" and he would probably smile and turn away repeating his steadfast conviction, "I knew a man caught up to the third heaven, whether in the body I cannot tell or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth. But he heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for man to utter."<sup>1</sup>

All we can say of these mystic states is that they may rightfully carry authority for those who have them; that they can have no authority for others; but that to grant their authority for anyone is to

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor., 12, 2.

overthrow the claim of the intellectual powers to be the sole ground of authority. The mystic's claim to immediacy in the perception of truth may point the way to a larger world than that dominated by the rational understanding; a world whose ways of intercourse are as much swifter than the ordinary processes of thought as wireless telegraphy is swifter than foot-messengers; a world in which St. John's sublime conjunction "for" is justified: "We shall be like Him, *for* we shall see Him as He is."

Spinoza was said to be a God-intoxicated man. Angelus Silesius was a man who panted to lose himself in God. But it must surely be that He who wills not that one of his little ones should perish, would not permit such suicide to be successful, but that one who thus aimed to lose his life for God's sake would find it. The epitaph which Silesius wrote "On an Upright Man" may well be his own:

Hier ist ein Mann gelegt, der stets im Durste lebte,  
Und nach Gerechtigkeit bey Tag und Nachte strebte,  
Und nie gesättigt ward. Nun ist ihm allbereit  
Sein Durst gestillt mit Gott der süßen Ewigkeit.<sup>1</sup>

(III, 49.)

Angelus Silesius sought God; and, as always, more abundantly than he had dreamed, God met

<sup>1</sup> Here lies a man who lived in thirst alway,  
Who strove for righteousness by night and day,  
And ne'er was satisfied. But, thirstless, he  
Now dwells with God in sweet eternity.



him. Like a river which, hemmed in on this side and on that, still struggles on, ever aiming at the sea; when, before it reaches the shore, the great tide rushes up, meets it, enfolds it, and sweeps it into the mighty depths in which it finds the glad fulfilment of its aim.

## IV

### ISAAC WATTS

IT is somewhat singular that the teachers of Protestant theology who have had probably the widest influence have been, not professors of divinity, not preachers, not persons of any standing as theological instructors, but unofficial men and women, often laymen and always self-appointed. For I suppose it is unquestionable that poetry, and especially hymns, has spread theology more widely than have treatises of divinity. Calvinism was stamped upon English-speaking peoples, not so much directly by the "Institutes" as by Milton's "Paradise Lost"; and even more efficient in establishing the system which came to be known as Evangelicalism were the hymns of the eighteenth century; secondarily those of Newton and the Wesleys, but primarily those of Isaac Watts. The formative influence of Watts, especially upon the religious life of New England, has been profound.

Hymn-singing is to us so much a matter of course that few persons probably are aware how recent a feature in public worship it is, and how great a strife was involved before it became established. Singing, it is true, formed part of the church service from primitive times; but the hymns of the Oriental

and Latin churches were generally sung by priest and choir, not by the people but for them, and throughout the Middle Ages not in the mother tongue. After the Reformation the necessity was felt for songs in the vernacular in which all the people could join; and Luther's hymns sent the Reformed doctrines flying through Germany, while the Psalms in Clement Marot's version were sung by French courtiers and peasants and fell from the lips of Huguenots as their heads fell at Amboise. In England the same need gave rise to the metrical version of the Psalms by Sternhold and Hopkins, which was adopted by the Church of England in 1562, and continued to be used for nearly two centuries and a half. But, let it be noted, in both the last two cases it was Psalms that were sung, not hymns. The Psalms, it was maintained, were inspired, while hymns were not. This argument would seem to compel the use of the holy text in every particular, without the change of a word and even in the original Hebrew; and there were those who stood up sturdily to the logic of the situation, and stumbled through the difficulties of trying to get a congregation to chant the very words of the Scripture, though not in the original. Chanting, however, had a certain popish flavor; and to avoid both this and unworshipful discord, metrical versions were tolerated. In King Edward the Sixth's chapel a metrical version of the Acts of the Apostles was in use, and the royal ear

was edified by listening to such inspiring strains as the following:

It chaunced in Iconium,  
As they oft tymes did use,  
Together they into did come  
The sinagoge of Jeus.

Where they did preache and only seke  
God's grace them to atchieve;  
That soe they speke to Jeu and Greke  
That many did bileve.<sup>1</sup>

Some, however, took refuge in banishing music altogether; and in the case of the Nonconformists in the latter half of the seventeenth century there was an additional reason for this. Singing might betray to the informer the meeting-house or the wood where the persecuted were assembled. Among those congregations which had no singing was the Baptist church in London, whose pastor was Benjamin Keach, and of which half a century ago Mr. Spurgeon was pastor. In 1691 Keach published a book entitled "The Breach Repaired in God's Worship; or Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs Proved to be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ."

<sup>1</sup> The first mention of the substitution of congregational psalmody for the old choral mode of worship places it in the reign of King Edward VI: "On March 15, 1550, M. Vernon, a Frenchman by birth but a learned Protestant and parson of St. Martin's, Ludgate, preached at St. Paul's Cross before the mayor and aldermen, and after sermon done they all sung in common a psalm in metre, as it seems now was frequently done, the custom being brought to us from abroad by the exiles." Nichols's *Progress of Queen Elizabeth*, i, 54.

This led after long discussion to the decision by his congregation to introduce singing; whereupon a disapproving minority seceded and established a place of worship for themselves, unpolluted by song.<sup>1</sup>

Other churches compromised on the Psalms in a metrical version, but, feeling that the line must be drawn somewhere, drew it at hymns. This issue again rent churches asunder. In 1623 George Wither published "Hymnes and Songs of the Church"; and he succeeded in procuring a letter-patent ordering that it should be inserted in every copy of the authorized "Psalm-book in meeter." But the hymns never became popular, and in 1634 the permission was withdrawn. We may perhaps trace some influence of Wither upon Watts, especially between the former's evening hymn, "Behold the sun that seemed but now, Enthronèd overhead," and the latter's "Thee we adore, eternal Name" (II, 55),

<sup>1</sup> "A curious controversy once agitated this body [the Baptists], as to the propriety of singing at all in worship; a practice which, at one period, they generally omitted. Mr. Keach was the first who broke the ice; he began to introduce singing at the ordinance; after a struggle of six years it was added to the devotions of thanksgiving days; and after fourteen years more of perseverance and debate, it was permitted at the close of each service on the Sabbath, that those who chose might withdraw and not have their ears offended by the sound. The church, however, divided, and the inharmonious formed a new society, which still flourishes in May's Pond. Isaac Marlowe fiercely opposed Mr. Keach, designating the practice as 'error, apostasy, human tradition, prelimited forms, mischievous error, carnal worship.'" Thomas Milner, *Life, Times, and Correspondence of Rev. Isaac Watts*, p. 360.

and between Wither's "Lullaby" and Watts's celebrated "Cradle Hymn." Yet the influence, if it exists, is shown not in imitation but rather in simplicity of subject and feeling.

The aversion to hymn-singing had a certain justification in the strong influence which, as I have said, hymns exert, and the possibility — which unfortunately, as we see, is no mere possibility — that erroneous opinions held by the well-meaning but ignorant authors of the hymns may be inculcated by them. It was Isaac Watts, who has been called almost the inventor of hymns in our language, who bridged the chasm between the songless or Psalm-using worship and the exuberant hymn-singing of our day.

He was born at Southampton in 1674. His father kept a boarding-school and was a Nonconformist. This latter fact prevented the boy from going to the university; for though some friends offered to meet the expense of a university education for him, this would have involved his becoming a member of the Church of England; and with the memory of the imprisonment for religion which his father had suffered, while his mother sat with Isaac in her arms on the stone at the prison-door, he refused the offer. Stories are told of his youthful precocity in literature — that he began to read Latin at four years old, and Greek and Hebrew soon after; that he composed respectable devotional verses at seven or



eight; that he devoured books and spent his casual pennies for them. Reverend Samuel Price, his colleague in the pastorate, gives the following account of the beginning of his hymn-writing, before he was fifteen years old:

The hymns which were sung at the Dissenting Meeting at Southampton were so little to the gust of Mr. Watts that he could not forbear complaining of them to his father. The father bid him try what he could do to mend the matter. He did; and had such success in his first essay, "Behold the glories of the Lamb," that a second hymn was earnestly desired of him, and then a third and fourth, till in process of time there was such a number of them as to make up a volume.<sup>1</sup>

This is an instance of the excellence and the defect of Watts as a hymn-writer. Apart from the fact that it is remarkable that a hymn like this could have been written by so young a person, the hymn shows Watts's directness of statement, ease of expression, and vividness in depicting a scene; but its origin was the demand of an external occasion rather than the compulsion of an internal impulse. Much of his poetry is of this stamp, and therefore tends to being machine-made. It would have been well if he had taken the advice of his friend Sir Edward King, who said to him in early life, "Young man, I hear that you make verses. Let me advise you never to do it but when you cannot help it."

<sup>1</sup> *The Hymn-Lover*, W. Garrett Horder, p. 98.

When he was fifteen he was sent to an academy in London, whose principal, Reverend Thomas Rowe, was also minister of a congregation of Independents. On leaving the academy he entered on one of those periods of mental incubation in which poets—Milton, Tennyson, and many others—have often engaged. He spent two years and a half in his father's house, doing nothing so far as accomplishment was visible, but, like another Congregational poet — Robert Browning — reading, meditating, writing, training himself in the handling of verse. Then for five years he was tutor in the family of Sir John Hartopp at Stoke Newington, a London suburb. For the last three of these years he was also assistant minister at the Mark Lane Independent Chapel in London; and when in 1701 the pastor, Dr. Isaac Chauncy, retired, Watts accepted a call to succeed him.

His health, however, had never been strong since a serious illness which he had when he was fifteen years old. Moreover, he had none of the modern knowledge of hygiene which enables feeble bodies to defy their limitations. So he indulged himself in hard work and little exercise and sleep cut short, till after a few months in the pastorate another severe illness laid him aside. He must have had much sweetness, intellectual power, and personal attraction to account for the devotion which his congregation even after so short a connection showed

him, and for their patience with his limitations throughout his long life. In dedicating a volume of sermons to his congregation he wrote: "Two and twenty years are now expired since you first called me to this delightful work. . . . Your forward kindness hath always forbid my requests; nor do I remember that you ever gave me leave to ask anything for myself at your hands, by your constant anticipation of all that I could reasonably desire."<sup>1</sup>

They gave him Reverend Samuel Price as an assistant, and for nine years he was able to take his duties with more or less regularity. Then another long attack of fever was followed by what we should call nervous prostration. Mr. Price now relieved him from most of the duties of his office by becoming co-pastor with him, and one of his friends, Sir Thomas Abney, invited him for a visit to his house at Theobald's, some dozen miles north of London. Watts went for a week, and remained with the family for thirty-six years, as long as he needed an earthly home.

Sir Thomas Abney was wealthy, prominent in city affairs, and, though a Nonconformist, had been in 1700 Lord Mayor of London. Theobald's had been built as a palace by Lord Burleigh but had been destroyed by the Long Parliament. Part of the splendid garden, however, still remained; and here, overhung by two rows of elms, were a long walk and

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Sermons on Various Subjects*, vol. i.

a summer house, where Watts is said to have composed many of his works. Sir Thomas and Lady Abney were the kindest of friends to him and their family became his own. Dr. Samuel Johnson found somewhat similar hospitality in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Thrale at Streatham Park; and shortly before Watts went to Sir Thomas Abney's, John Locke ended with his life a fourteen-year visit to Sir Francis and Lady Masham at Oates in Essex. Such a relation between host and guest was close enough to require the distance of politeness and distant enough to exclude close quarrelling; though this was hardly the case always between Johnson and the Thrales.

While Watts was living with the Abneys, Lady Abney's brother, Thomas Gunston, died, and left to her his manor-house at Stoke Newington, which was then a country village. Some time after, probably about 1735, the Abneys removed to Stoke Newington, though Sir Thomas had died in 1722. Here Watts spent the last thirteen years of his life. He never married; and it was through the three daughters of his hosts, Sarah, Mary, and Elizabeth Abney, that he gained that acquaintance with childhood which led him to become the pioneer in the religious education of children.

His residence with the Abneys did not interrupt his relations with his parish; for whenever he wished to officiate, Lady Abney's carriage was at his dis-

posal, and when he did not feel able, his colleague, Reverend Mr. Price, stood ready to supply his place. The rush of parish work, which in our time drives many a minister to constant business and intellectual sterility, did not then exist. The demands of a parish, apart from public services, were much the same as they had been a century before in George Herbert's day; and though the duties of a city minister were naturally more complex than those of a country parson, they were on the same plan. "The Country Parson," says Herbert, "upon the afternoons in the weekdays takes occasion sometimes to visite in person now one quarter of his Parish, now another. For there he shall find his flock most naturally as they are, wallowing in the midst of their affairs."

To live in the country, with no household cares, to drive into town and preach occasionally, to have a colleague who should attend to the business of the parish — such conditions would seem to some modern ministers ideal, to others ludicrously insufficient. To Dr. Watts they gave the opportunity of establishing a close bond between himself and his congregation, of gaining a prominent position as a preacher and leader among the Nonconformists, of publishing an amount of prose vast for even a literary person in that voluminous age, of attaining a place — not of the first rank but indisputable — among the poets of the language, and of moulding

the thoughts and kindling the emotions of English Protestant Christians for more than a century.

After Sir Thomas Abney's death his widow and her daughters continued to care for their guest with the same munificent and affectionate devotion they had already shown. As he grew feeble, a friend asked him one day how he was. "Waiting God's leave to die," he replied. On November 25, 1748, in his seventy-fifth year, the awaited permission came.

In 1722, the University of Edinburgh conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He was a voluminous writer; in addition to his poetical works he wrote on logic, astronomy, geography, grammar, pedagogics, and ethics. He published also in his lifetime three volumes of sermons and twenty-nine treatises on theology. His publications were fifty-two in all. His collected works were issued in London in 1810, in six volumes, and again in 1812, in nine volumes. He has a monument in the cemetery in Abney Park, where he is buried, and also in Westminster Abbey, with a memorial hall and a statue in his native Southampton.

It was the need for song better adapted to public worship that led Watts to writing, and it was he who constructed the bridge between the metrical versions of the Psalms and the ampler hymnody of our day. The further pier of his bridge was, it is true, the Psalms in a metrical version. Like Lazarus, he had "come forth," but with the clothes of the dead



past still around him. But this version of his was quite different from that of Sternhold and Hopkins, or of Tate and Brady which had preceded it. They had largely confined themselves to a Procrustean arrangement of the biblical words into lines and feet. But the character of Watts's version was expressed in its title: "The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament." He never hesitated to read the New Testament into the Old, to substitute gospel for law, to make David sing the song, not only of Moses, but of the Lamb. Thus where the author of the 103d Psalm says, "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction," Watts amplifies and transforms this into

'T is he, my soul, that sent his Son  
To die for crimes that thou hast done.

That Watts had gauged the public need with accuracy is shown by the reception which his Psalms and hymns met. Among the Nonconformists they drove out all others and dominated song in worship for a century. Their influence reached New England somewhat later than their home. "The Bay Psalm Book," published in 1640, was used here until the middle of the next century, when it was superseded by Tate and Brady, and this, toward the end of the century, by Watts. A half-century later the Psalms came to be generally disused and a wider range of hymns desired. This led to the publication known as "Watts and Select," in which, to Watts's Psalms

and hymns there were added two hundred and thirty-four hymns by different authors.

Two obstacles have prevented a more general appreciation of Watts's poetry. One is the enormous amount of his output and the consequent worthlessness of much of it. Few persons are patient enough to wade through six hundred hymns, together with two volumes of other poetry, in order to winnow the grain from the chaff. But the nutritive grain is there. The other obstacle is that the hymns are generally regarded from a homiletic rather than a poetic point of view. Their value is supposed to lie in the doctrines which they set forth; and because these doctrines are to-day for the most part out of fashion, the hymns are relegated to the scrap-heap. But their value lies, as with all poetry, not in inculcating an opinion but in conveying a mood. The background must be granted. The pastoral poetry of the eighteenth century dealt in nymphs and swains, creatures as impossible to find in the country as fairies or salamanders. But granting that the poet chose to employ these figures, the important question is, what did he do with them? So if one would discover the value of Watts, his theological scenery must be assumed. In order to understand him we must see not merely the world but the universe, as he saw it. Assume a great monarch sitting aloft upon a throne, exercising a sway of arbitrary and absolute power over those for whom the poet's favorite desig-

nation is "worms of the dust." Never mind whether that is an adequate conception of God, but could there be a more splendid statement of it than this?

Keep silence, all created things,  
And wait your Maker's nod!  
My soul stands trembling while she sings  
The honours of her God.

Life, death, and hell, and worlds unknown  
Hang on his firm decree.  
He sits on no precarious throne,  
Nor borrows leave to be.

. . . . .

Chained to his throne a volume lies,  
With all the fates of men,  
With every angel's form and size,  
Drawn by the eternal pen.

. . . . .

Here he exalts neglected worms  
To sceptres and a crown;  
Anon the following page he turns  
And treads the monarchs down.

Not Gabriel asks the reason why,  
Nor God the reason gives,  
Nor dares the favorite angel pry  
Between the folded leaves.<sup>1</sup>

Or see the poet again as he stands with bated  
breath before this sovereign presence:

<sup>1</sup> *Horæ Lyricæ*, p. 9. The references are to any edition of the *Psalms and the three books of Hymns*, and to *Horæ Lyricæ*, ed. Little, Brown, & Co., Boston, 1854.

The Lord! how fearful is his name!  
 How wide is his command!  
 Nature with all her moving frame  
 Rests on his mighty hand.

Immortal glory forms his throne,  
 And light his awful robe,  
 While with a smile or with a frown  
 He manages the globe.

A word of his Almighty breath  
 Can swell or sink the seas,  
 Build the vast empires of the earth  
 Or break them, as he please.

Adoring angels round him fall  
 In all their shining forms;  
 His sovereign eye looks thro' them all,  
 And pities mortal worms.<sup>1</sup>

This thought of the Divine action as based, not upon reasonableness but upon pure will is as inspiring to Watts as it is repulsive to us. He has a thoroughly Hebraic joy in it.

When the Eternal bows the skies  
 To visit earthly things,  
 With scorn divine he turns his eyes  
 From towers of haughty kings;

Rides on a cloud disdainful by  
 A sultan or a czar,  
 Laughs at the worms that rise so high,  
 Or frowns 'em from afar.

<sup>1</sup> *H. L.*, p. 86.

He bids his awful chariot roll  
Far downward from the skies,  
To visit every humble soul,  
With pleasure in his eyes.

Why should the Lord, that reigns above,  
Disdain so lofty kings?  
Say, Lord, and why such looks of love  
Upon such worthless things?

Mortals, be dumb! What creature dares  
Dispute his awful will!  
Ask no account of his affairs,  
But tremble and be still.

Just like his nature is his grace,  
All sovereign and all free.  
Great God, how searchless are thy ways!  
How deep thy judgments be! <sup>1</sup>

It would be difficult to express the majesty of  
God more adequately than in the following verses:

Nature and time quite naked lie  
To thine immense survey,  
From the formation of the sky  
To the great burning day.

Eternity, with all its years,  
Stands present in thy view;  
To thee there's nothing old appears;  
Great God, there's nothing new.

Our lives through various scenes are drawn,  
And vexed with trifling cares,  
While thine eternal thoughts move on  
Thine undisturbed affairs.

<sup>1</sup> *H. L.*, p. 56.

Great God, how infinite are thou!  
 What worthless worms are we!  
 Let the whole race of creatures bow  
 And pay their praise to thee! <sup>1</sup>

Again, his heaven may not be ours, but see what a charming place it is. He is as confident in regard to its features and inhabitants as he is of the country around Theobald's. Yet if we smile in the superiority of our knowledge or stiffen up and declare, "No such topography for me!" we shall miss the sweetness and felicity of such glad lines as these:

There is a land of pure delight  
 Where saints immortal reign;  
 Infinite day excludes the night,  
 And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting Spring abides,  
 And never-withering flowers;  
 Death, like a narrow sea, divides  
 This heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood  
 Stand dressed in living green;  
 So to the Jews old Canaan stood,  
 While Jordan rolled between.<sup>2</sup>

The incomparable joys of heaven, eagerness to reach it, and the consequent insignificance of death, are his favorite subjects. One leads to another.

My God, the spring of all my joys,  
 The life of my delights,  
 The glory of my brightest days  
 And comfort of my nights,

<sup>1</sup> II, 67.

<sup>2</sup> II, 66.



In darkest shades if he appear,  
 My dawning is begun.  
 He is my soul's sweet morning-star,  
 And he my rising sun.

. . . . .

My soul would leave this heavy clay  
 At that transporting word,  
 Run up with joy the shining way  
 To embrace my dearest Lord.

Fearless of hell and ghastly death,  
 I'd break through every foe;  
 The wings of love and arms of faith  
 Should bear me conqueror through.<sup>1</sup>

Those who have known Watts's hymns have perhaps no association with them more sacred than with that one which they have often heard sung by pious fathers and mothers, half in doubting hesitation, half in triumphant confidence:

When I can read my title clear  
 To mansions in the skies,  
 I bid farewell to every fear  
 And wipe my weeping eyes.

Should earth against my soul engage  
 And hellish darts be hurled,  
 Then I can smile at Satan's rage,  
 And face a frowning world.

Let cares like a wild deluge come,  
 And storms of sorrow fall;  
 May I but safely reach my home,  
 My God, my heaven, my all,

<sup>1</sup> II, 54.

There shall I bathe my weary soul  
 In seas of heavenly rest,  
 And not a wave of trouble roll  
 Across my peaceful breast.<sup>1</sup>

Edwin Paxton Hood says: "The gifted nobleman who was the Mæcenus of the past age, was not an indifferent critic, and when called on to cite the most perfect verse in the language, he immediately instanced" the last stanza above quoted.<sup>2</sup>

Such a celestial prospect makes one long for its realization. Moses was the fortunate one in his death, in spite of his disappointment, for he not only received God's commands but was accompanied at every step by the comforting divine presence.

Sweet was the journey to the sky  
 The wondrous prophet tried;  
 "Climb up the mount," says God, "and die!"  
 The prophet climbed and died.

Softly his fainting head he lay  
 Upon his Maker's breast;  
 His Maker kissed his soul away  
 And laid his flesh to rest.

In God's own arms he left the breath  
 That God's own spirit gave.  
 His was the noblest road to death,  
 And his the sweetest grave.<sup>3</sup>

With such a blissful transition in view, death is a welcome messenger, and a saint who is dying is to be envied.

<sup>1</sup> II, 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Isaac Watts, His Life and Writings, Homes and Friends*, p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> *H. L.*, p. 129.

Lord, when we see a saint of thine  
Lie gasping out his breath,  
With longing eyes and looks divine,  
Smiling and pleased in death;

How could we e'en contend to lay  
Our limbs upon that bed!  
We ask thine envoy to convey  
Our spirits in his stead.

Our souls are rising on the wing  
To venture in his place,  
For when grim Death has lost his sting  
He has an angel's face.

. . . . .

Oh! if my threatening sins were gone  
And Death had lost his sting,  
I could invite the angel on,  
And chide his lazy wing.

Away, these interposing days,  
And let the lovers meet!  
The angel has a cold embrace,  
But kind and soft and sweet.

I'd leap at once my seventy years,  
I'd rush into his arms,  
And lose my breath and all my cares  
Amidst those heavenly charms.

Joyful, I'd lay this body down  
And leave the lifeless clay  
Without a sigh, without a groan,  
And stretch and soar away.<sup>1</sup>

However we may portray heaven, we are apt to be squeamish about depicting hell, even if we concede its existence. Though we may take symbols for

<sup>1</sup> *H. L.*, p. 42.

realities elsewhere, we never think of regarding the condition depicted in Dante's *Inferno* as a statement of fact. But Watts saw no reason for restraining his imagination in describing a locality which to him was as real as the slums of London. Moreover, the homiletic fashion of the Middle Ages, when the torture of criminals was common and frequently a public spectacle, had not ceased in Watts's day, as indeed it has not wholly in some quarters at present, and preachers were accustomed to balance their exhibition of the splendors of heaven by lurid descriptions, reeking with brimstone and bristling with horrors, of the torments of hell. Watts is much more restrained than most of these, both in quantity and quality. His hymns on this subject are comparatively few. The worst of them is the following:

My thoughts on awful subjects roll,  
 Damnation and the dead;  
 What horrors seize the guilty soul  
 Upon a dying bed!

Lingering about these mortal shores  
 She makes a long delay,  
 Till like a flood with rapid force,  
 Death sweeps the wretch away.

Then swift and dreadful she descends  
 Down to the fiery coast  
 Amongst abominable fiends,  
 Herself a frightened ghost.

There endless crowds of sinners lie,  
 And darkness makes their chains;  
 Tortured with keen despair they cry,  
 Yet wait for fiercer pains.

Not all their anguish and their blood  
 For their old guilt atones,  
 Nor the compassion of a God  
 Shall hearken to their groans.

Amazing grace, that kept my breath,  
 Nor bid my soul remove  
 Till I had learned my Saviour's death,  
 And well insured his love!<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult in view of such verses to keep the compact we made with the poet, and, while appreciating his poetry as poetry, let him display his theology unprotected.

His tendency to visualize scenes makes almost every description vivid. One would hardly suppose a study in anatomy could be put into a hymn; but Watts accomplishes this feat, and makes the anatomy thoroughly poetic.

Let others boast how strong they be,  
 Nor death nor danger fear;  
 But we'll confess, O Lord, to thee  
 What feeble things we are.

. . . . .

Our life contains a thousand springs,  
 And dies if one be gone.  
 Strange, that a harp of thousand strings  
 Should keep in tune so long!

. . . . .

He spoke, and straight our hearts and brains  
 In all their motions rose.  
 "Let blood," said he, "flow round the veins!"  
 And round the veins it flows.

<sup>1</sup> II, 2.

While we have breath to use our tongues,  
 Our Maker we 'll adore.  
 His spirit moves our heaving lungs,  
 Or they would breathe no more.<sup>1</sup>

I said that it is difficult, in reading some of Watts's hymns, to take them for their poetic worth and not cry out on their theology. It is especially hard for a child-lover when the poet faces the dualism at the base of his system of theologic thought and carries it unflinchingly to its logical conclusion. The Latin mind had from the first posited an opposition between the divine and the human. Whatever is of the one is not of the other; the divine is non-human, the human non-divine. It follows that certain departments belong to God, certain others to man. "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath He given to the children of men." The torturing dilemma then presents itself: Which shall I love, my friends or God? Not both, for what is given to the one can but be just so much taken from the other. I ought to love God supremely, but can I refrain from loving my friends? Many a tender conscience has been thus plunged into torment because it has not understood the First Epistle of St. John. Watts felt obliged to versify on all the doctrines of his theology and therefore on this. If we have an eye for beauty rather than for dogmatics, we may forgive him his poem for the sake of one line in it.

<sup>1</sup> II, 19.



Where'er my flattering passions rove  
 I find a lurking snare;  
 'Tis dangerous to let loose our love  
 Beneath the Eternal Fair.

Souls which the tie of friendship binds,  
 And partners of our blood,  
 Seize a large portion of our minds,  
 And leave the less for God.

Nature has soft but powerful bands,  
 And reason she controls,  
 While children, with their little hands,  
 Hang closest to our souls.

Thoughtless, they act the old serpent's part,  
 What tempting things they be!  
 Lord, how they twine about our heart  
 And draw it off from Thee!

. . . . .

Dear Sovereign, break these fetters off,  
 And set our spirits free!  
 God in himself is bliss enough,  
 For we have all in Thee.<sup>1</sup>

We may well overlook the dreadfulfulness of his doctrine for the sake of the felicitous tenderness of that line,

What tempting things they be!

Watts himself seems to have felt that the poem needed some excuse, for he never included it among his hymns, and to the section of poems of which this is the first, he added a note, saying that it may be an apology for what may displease in them that

<sup>1</sup> *H. L.*, p. 103.

they were written "in his youngest years." Moreover, he was regardlessly illogical in his practice, and refused to dismiss the love of children as infringing on love to God; for he was fond of children and devoted to the daughters of Sir Thomas and Lady Abney. Much theology which he felt bound to hold he, like other people, found it convenient to be not held by.

But more than this, he was the first to recognize that children had poetic rights and to give them a place in literature. In all Chaucer's crowded picture-gallery there is no portrait of a child; for the only tale bearing on the subject is a monkish legend,<sup>1</sup> and its subject is as far from being a real child as is the hero of an infant biography in a Sunday School library. Spenser has nothing to do with children. Shakespeare deals with them only four brief times.<sup>2</sup> Milton, apart from his youthful poem on the Death of a Fair Infant, does not mention them; for though the actors of "Comus" were originally children, the characters in the Masque are mature. Dean Colet had cast on them a kindly eye, and had endeavored to soften the asperities of learning for them.<sup>3</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> *The Prioress's Tale.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *King John*, *King Henry V*, *Coriolanus*, *Macbeth*.

<sup>3</sup> In the Latin Grammar which he wrote for his school of St. Paul's he says: "For the love and zeal that I have to the new school of Paul's and to the children of the same, I have of the eight parts of grammar made this little book. In which, if any new things be of me, it is alonely that I have put these parts in a more clear order, and I have

that child-world, whose discovery has been so marked a feature of the last fifty years, was unknown in the seventeenth century, and Isaac Watts was the Columbus who brought it into notice. Not that he had that interest in the study of children in themselves, that absorption in the charm of their looks and ways, that admission of their concerns to a level in dignity and importance with those of older people, which characterize modern child-worship. These have been later developments. To him, as to his contemporaries and our own benighted grandparents, children were to be seen and not heard, and they must ever be taught subordination, obedience, and their own comparative unimportance. But Watts had a profound interest in their education, especially their education in religion. He endeavored to construct a path from the school-books, to which they were driven by duty, into a field of literature to which they would resort of themselves. The path, it is true,

made them a little more easy to young wits than (me thinketh) they were before; judging that nothing may be too soft nor too familiar for little children, specially learning a tongue unto them all strange. In which little book I have left many things out of purpose, considering the tenderness and small capacity of little minds. . . . Wherefore I pray you, all little babes, all little children, learn gladly this little treatise and commend it diligently unto your memories, trusting that of this beginning that ye shall proceed and grow to perfect literature, and come at the last to be great clerks. And lift up your little white hands for me, which prayeth for you to God, to whom be all honour and imperial majesty and glory. Amen." Frederic Seebohm, *The Oxford Reformers*, p. 214.

conducted, not as with the children's books of to-day, to the flowery meadows of unhampered amusement, but to the uplands of morality and religion. But it was a pleasant path, adapted to little feet; and if a finger-post every now and then was pointing a didactic moral, why, that was only what every child expected and every grown person would have been shocked to find absent. So Dr. Watts issued a book, "Divine and Moral Songs," parts of which, it is safe to say, have become almost as classic in the childish world as Mother Goose. Few well-bred children of the past generation — I cannot speak with as much knowledge of those of the present — did not know

Whatever brawls disturb the street,  
There should be peace at home;  
Where sisters dwell and brothers meet,  
Quarrels should never come.

Birds in their little nests agree;  
And 'tis a shameful sight  
When children of one family  
Fall out and chide and fight;<sup>1</sup>

and

Let dogs delight to bark and bite,  
For God hath made them so.  
Let bears and lions growl and fight,  
For 'tis their nature too.

But, children, you should never let  
Such angry passions rise;  
Your little hands were never made  
To tear each other's eyes;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *H. L.*, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

and

How doth the little busy bee  
Improve each shining hour,  
And gather honey all the day  
From every opening flower!

How skillfully she builds her cell!  
How neat she spreads the wax!  
And labours hard to store it well  
With the sweet food she makes!

In works of labour or of skill  
I would be busy too;  
For Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do.<sup>1</sup>

His Cradle Hymn, "Hush, my Dear, lie still and slumber," has crooned many a tired child to sleep. These "Divine and Moral Songs" deserve remembrance and respect not only as pioneers in literature for children but for the intrinsic merit of many of them. "Edition after edition rapidly issued from the press in England and America, and translations have since appeared in many of the European and transatlantic languages. The number of copies that have been circulated throughout the world must amount to many millions; upwards of thirty millions in this country are regularly kept in print; and, upon a moderate computation, the average annual sale in England only cannot be less than eighty thousand."<sup>2</sup>

In summing up the characteristics of Watts's

<sup>1</sup> *H. L.*, p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Milner, *The Life, Times, and Correspondence of Rev. Isaac Watts*, p. 372.

poetry we may place first its reverence. It was a time when the thought of the immanence of God in nature and in man had almost fallen out of sight. The devout Christian of our day sees God around him so constantly, though he may not always call the higher element in life which he sees by the name of God, that the Divine presence is no surprise to him; he takes it as a matter of course. But to the men of the eighteenth century, filled as they were with the thought of the Divine transcendence, it was always a wonder and a surprise when the heavens or the earth opened and behind the visible they beheld God. They delighted, as they expressed it, to "see God in His works"; and in the fields decked with flowers, the towering mountain, the roaring sea, the glittering night-sky, it was not directly beauty that they saw, but the Jehovah of the Old Testament suddenly revealed, and before such an immediate vision they bowed in awe. This attitude of worship is the chief characteristic of the best work of Watts. He is occupied with the deepest subjects which can interest men and which must interest them perpetually. They wear in him, however, the dress of his day, and this unfortunately often repels us. But beneath their dress lies their kinship with the souls of every age. These subjects he always treats with befitting dignity. More than that, when he approaches God there is ever with him the sense of awe; he bows low in the Divine presence. And as this is the subject



of profoundest interest to him, it is the field of his most satisfactory work. He is almost unique in his ability to convey the impression of sublimity. His Muse is best when she walks with an "incedo regina" air. It is sometimes supposed that the Puritan mind had little interest in poetry. That interest is often underestimated. But as the central doctrine of Calvinism was the absoluteness of God, that poetry was chiefly interesting to the Puritan which exhibited this absoluteness in all its grandeur. It was partly for this reason that Watts had so strong a hold upon minds which inherited the Puritan tradition. In the austere doctrines which they held he showed them the springs of feeling.

This is the second characteristic of his poetry—its passion. His verses are by no means mere rhymed theology, but they are the outpouring of the effect of theology upon a sensitive and eager soul. He has not only found, as an earnest thinker might, the meat for daily life lying hidden in theologic doctrines, but he has discovered the joy in them, the dread, the inspiration, the bliss. He carries them over from the domain of thought into that of feeling, and in giving us their emotional value, awakens it in us. The Puritan, contrary again to the popular impression, was not an unemotional person, though it took something of the eternal to touch his emotions; but when they were touched, they burned with a deep and consuming fire. Lord Rosebery in one of his

speeches says: "The Puritan was a practical mystic, the most formidable and terrible of all combinations." In a sermon on the use of the passions in religion Watts exclaims:

Have they [preachers] no such thing as passion belonging to them? . . . Have they no springs of affection within them? or do they think their hearers have none? Or is passion so vile a power that it must be all devoted to things of flesh and sense, and must never be applied to things divine and heavenly? Who taught any of us this lazy and drowsy practice? . . . Did the great God ever appoint statues for His ambassadors to invite sinners to His mercy? Words of grace written upon brass or marble would do the work almost as well. . . . How careless and indolent is a whole assembly when the preacher appears like a lifeless engine, pronouncing words of law or grace, when he speaks of divine things in such a cold and formal manner as though they had no influence upon his own heart! When the words freeze upon his lips, the hearts of hearers are freezing also.

The Romantic Movement had not yet awakened men to behold the world; but that enthusiasm which the Romanticist came to feel for the world of nature, Watts felt for what he would have called the world of grace; but his world, instead of having for its contents hills and fields, had whatever concerned God, the human soul, and salvation. If the Church of England could have recognized the value of emotion in religion and found a place for it within her

respectable doors, the Methodist Movement, of which it was the very life-blood, would probably not have resulted in secession. But during Watts's boyhood Dr. South was denouncing enthusiasm as worse than popery; "A monster," he calls it, "from whose teeming womb have issued some of the vilest, the foulest, the most absurd practices and opinions that the nature of man (as corrupt as it is) was ever poisoned and polluted with." <sup>1</sup> A generation before the Wesleys and Doddridge taught people to sing their religion, Watts was preparing the ground by pouring forth psalms and hymns which were full of ardent religious feeling.

Another characteristic of his poetry is its introspection. In this, it is true, he is not alone, for most religious poetry down to comparatively recent times has been occupied chiefly with religion in its relation to the individual. It was the distinctive note of Puritanism that the human soul and God are the two great objects which fill its vision. "God and I; I and God," was the solemn chant sounding perpetually through the chambers in which the devout Puritan soul dwelt. The modern development of a social conscience had not yet awakened men to the complexity of the soul and therefore to its corporate relations with others. So Watts, like other devout singers, sees primarily the Jacob's Ladder connect-

<sup>1</sup> South's Sermons, *Satan Himself Transformed into an Angel of Light*.

ing heaven with himself. His introspection, however, we may perhaps say, has a somewhat different emphasis from that of George Herbert, for example, a century earlier. Herbert, in meditating on his soul and God, fixes his gaze more on God—His outgoing bounteousness, His unwearied search for men, His familiar converse with them. It is the angels descending that he sees. Watts is apt to give attention rather to the other end of the Ladder—the condition of his own soul and the ascending angels. He rejoices that he is among the saved; he wonders whether he is; he is overcome at the thought that it is for him that Christ died; he examines what came to be called, in the curious religious phraseology of the day, his “frames.” This, however, is not mere egotism, for he regards himself as a type of every earnest Christian. But he gave a strong impetus to religion as a personal experience, to what was called “experimental religion,” which pressed upon every one the insistent question, “Are you a Christian?” The question would probably never have occurred to Herbert, so much would it have been for him a matter of course. To Watts, and even more to the generation following, it was the universal question of vital importance. The strength of the Church of Rome lies in her utilization of those sides of human nature in which choice is not directly involved, which are appealed to by the institutions of religion. Much of the strength of Protestantism lies in her

call to the will, to personal affirmation. This has been a marked characteristic in that strong type of personality which has been so prominent a feature in Protestantism. Protestantism and individualism are near of kin.

To these characteristics of Watts's poetry must be joined another — a certain love of beauty. The assiduous study of nature had, as I said, not then arisen. But Watts has an eye for the country landscape as he walks

Abroad in the meadows to see the young lambs  
Run sporting about by the side of their dams,  
With fleeces so clean and so white;

and he exclaims,

How fair is the rose! What a beautiful flower!  
The glory of April and May!

He feels the calm of a summer evening:

How fine has the day been, how bright was the sun!  
How lovely and joyful the course that he run,  
Though he rose in a mist when his race he begun,  
And there followed some droopings of rain!  
But now the fair traveller's come to the west,  
His rays are all gold and his beauties are best;  
He paints the skies gay as he sinks to his rest,  
And foretells a bright rising again.<sup>1</sup>

But it is chiefly in his literary style that he shows his eye for beauty, or perhaps we might rather say, for form. Dr. Johnson declares of him: "He was one

<sup>1</sup> *H. L.*, p. 345.

of the first authors that taught the Dissenters to court attention by the graces of language. Whatever they had among them before, whether of learning or acuteness, was commonly obscured and blunted by coarseness and inelegance of style.”<sup>1</sup> This verdict is supported by a passage in a letter from Enoch Watts to his brother Isaac, in which he says: “A load of scandal lies on the Dissenters only for their imagined aversion to poetry.” Isaac Watts insists on the importance of beauty and therefore of poetry, and in poetry, of fit and beautiful expression. To appreciate the innovating character of the following passage we must remember that in his time poetry, like novels, was regarded by the pious as “worldly”:

The profanation and debasement of so divine an art has tempted some weaker Christians to imagine that poetry and vice are naturally akin; or at least that verse is only fit to recommend trifles and entertain our looser hours, but it is too light and trivial a method to treat anything that is serious and sacred. They submit, indeed, to use it in divine psalmody; but they love the driest translation of the Psalm best. They will venture to sing a full hymn or two at church in tunes of equal dulness; but still they persuade themselves and their children that the beauties of poetry are vain and dangerous. All that arises above Mr. Sternhold is too airy for worship, and hardly escapes the sentence of “unclean and abominable.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lives of the Poets*, ii, 453.

<sup>2</sup> *H. L.*, Preface, p. lxxxii.



Felicities of expression are continually occurring in his verse. Thus he says:

There's nothing round this spacious earth  
That suits my large desire.

(II, 10.)

His spirit would fly above, within the starry heavens,

Beyond those crystal vaults  
And all their sparkling balls;  
They're but the porches to thy courts,  
And paintings on thy walls.

(*H. L.*, p. 71.)

Lord, when I quit this earthly stage,  
Where shall I fly but to thy breast?  
For I have sought no other home,  
For I have learned no other rest.

(II, 100.)

In all my vast concerns with thee,  
In vain my soul would try  
To shun thy presence, Lord, or flee  
The notice of thine eye.

. . . . .

O wondrous knowledge, deep and high!  
Where can a creature hide?  
Within thy circling arms I lie,  
Beset on every side!

(Psalm 139.)

Thy words the raging winds controul,  
And rule the boisterous deep;  
Thou mak'st the sleeping billows roll,  
The rolling billows sleep.

(Psalm 89.)

Lo, what a glorious sight appears  
 To our believing eyes!  
 The earth and seas are passed away,  
 And the old rolling skies.

His own soft hand shall wipe the tears  
 From every weeping eye,  
 And pains and groans and griefs and fears  
 And death itself shall die. (I, 21.)

The similarity of thought in the lines beginning

My mind to me a kingdom is,  
 which, dating a century before Watts, are ascribed  
 both to Edward Dyer and to William Byrd, does not  
 take from the dignity and felicity of Watts's "True  
 Riches":

I am not concerned to know  
 What to-morrow fate will do;  
 'Tis enough that I can say,  
 I've possessed myself to-day.  
 Then if haply midnight death  
 Seize my flesh and stop my breath,  
 Yet to-morrow I shall be  
 Heir to the best part of me.  
 Glittering stones, and golden things,  
 Wealth and honours that have wings,  
 Ever fluttering to be gone,  
 I could never call my own.  
 Riches that the world bestows  
 She can take and I can lose;  
 But the treasures that are mine  
 Lie afar beyond her line.  
 When I view my spacious soul,  
 And survey myself a whole,  
 And enjoy myself alone,  
 I'm a kingdom of my own.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *H. L.*, p. 182.

The solemn dirge of the ninetieth Psalm is almost as impressive in Watts's version as in the stately words of King James's translators:

Our God, our help in ages past,  
 Our hope for years to come,  
 Our shelter from the stormy blast,  
 And our eternal home,

Under the shadow of thy throne  
 Thy saints have dwelt secure;  
 Sufficient is thine arm alone,  
 And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood  
 Or earth received her frame,  
 From everlasting thou art God,  
 To endless years the same.

. . . . .

A thousand ages in thy sight  
 Are like an evening gone,  
 Short as the watch that ends the night  
 Before the rising sun.

. . . . .

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
 Bears all its sons away;  
 They fly forgotten, as a dream  
 Dies at the opening day.

. . . . .

Our God, our help in ages past,  
 Our hope for years to come,  
 Be thou our guard while troubles last,  
 And our eternal home!

When I remarked that Watts had a certain love of beauty, I meant, as we generally mean by the

phrase, an uncertain one. His aim — let me say it again — is ever homiletical; and not being interested in pure beauty for its own sake, he can do violence to it in ways which would be those of a ruffian if they were not merely those of a preacher. Thus he never lets imperfect rhymes stand in his way. He rhymes “wing” and “begin” (II, 58.3), “not” and “thoughts” (III, 6.1), “tune” and “throne” (III, i.1), “bliss” and “trees” (II, 16.5), “me” and “sea” (I, 127.2). Of this last we may say, “But that is all right.” But according to the pronunciation of his day, it was not, for the latter word was then pronounced “say.”<sup>1</sup> When he is under headway he does not pause to make his rhyming-scheme consistent. Instead of “abab,” as in the rest of the hymn, he puts in “abcb” (I, 108.1). He shows at times shockingly bad taste, as for example:

Here we behold His bowels roll  
 As kind as when He died,  
 And see the sorrows of His soul  
 Bleed through His wounded side.  
(III, 4. 6.)

<sup>1</sup> God moves in a mysterious way  
 His wonders to perform;  
 He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
 And rides upon the storm.  
Cowper.

Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey.  
 Dost sometimes counsel take and sometimes tea.  
Pope, *Rape of the Lock*,  
 III, 7.

And when our great-grandparents laid away their loved dead, and the otherwise beautiful hymn, "Why do we mourn departing friends?" rose to the mournful wail of "China," how painfully it must have jarred to come to the third stanza:

Why should we tremble to convey  
 Their bodies to the tomb?  
 There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,  
 And left a long perfume.  
 (II, 3.)

He worked at the technique of his art, as his work shows. His lines flow smoothly and swiftly, without break. He never embarrasses the sense to fit the metre. He is skillful in varying the cæsura, and in the use of lines end-stopped and run on. He experimented with various kinds of verse, and the result exhibits skill. Here he is wielding Sapphic hendecasyllables:

When the fierce north wind with his airy forces  
 Rears up the Baltic to a foaming fury,  
 And the red lightning with a storm of hail comes  
 Rushing amain down,

How the poor sailors stand amazed and tremble!  
 While the hoarse thunder, like a bloody trumpet,  
 Roars a loud onset to the gaping waters,  
 Quick to devour them!

Such shall the noise be and the wild disorder  
 (If things eternal may be like these earthly),  
 Such the dire terror, when the great archangel  
 Shakes the creation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *H. L.*, p. 74.

But there is an appalling amount in his output. One hundred and fifty Psalms, each in many cases in several different metres — Long, Short, Common, Particular — three hundred and sixty-five hymns, thirty-six “Divine and Moral Songs,” two unasorted books of hymns and lyrical poems — it is enough to daunt the stoutest seeker for poetic gold. Knowing that most of such a mass must be but dust, one wishes for a sifter to make a selection from his poems, as Matthew Arnold did for Wordsworth. This indeed has been accomplished automatically. The compilers of hymn-books have taken what they found valuable and incorporated it in their publications, and the bulk of this has been very considerable. “The Sabbath Hymn Book,” published in 1858, contains two hundred and fifty-five hymns by Watts. The number in more recent publications is less, owing to the change in popular theology in the last half-century. But take almost any hymn-book of the present day, and it will be found that Watts has contributed to it more than any other writer.

I said that his hymns are not mere rhymed theology, though they aimed to be theology — that is, Calvinism — in rhyme. His God is the Hebrew Jehovah unmodified. His theory of the Atonement is bloody substitutionalism; his hell is material and perpetual. But he aimed to do something more than put Calvinism into verse; he aimed to give it emo-



tional value. And as we look over his most repellent lines, we shall find almost all of them bathed in an atmosphere of feeling and gaining a respect, a worth, and often a beauty thereby. Yet while he accepted the Calvinism of his day, a kindly heart compelled him, as it has done so many others, to modify illogically its severities.

That spirit led him to declare his persuasion that heathens and savages who never heard of the gospel are not left to perish unavoidably without any hope or any grace to trust in; but if there be found among them any who fear God and work righteousness, they shall be accepted of Him through an unknown Mediator, as Cornelius was. It led him to entertain a curious opinion concerning the souls of those who die in infancy. The execrable notion that they are condemned to eternal punishment for their portion of original sin, he utterly rejected. . . . Rather than condemn them to a wretched resurrection for the purpose of being condemned, he would have chosen to believe in a metempsychosis, and that the soul on its early separation from one body entered into another, in which it might go through that state of trial on which its eternal destiny might equitably depend. But in his judgment it was more likely, as more consonant with Scripture, that they underwent in its strict and final sense the penalty of temporal death denounced against all the race of Adam, and that there was no resurrection appointed for them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Southey, *Life of Isaac Watts*, in *H. L.*, p. 39.

And this loop-hole he enlarged yet more favorably, for he held that the infant children of the elect would be regarded as part of their parents, and so exempt from annihilation and accepted under the covenant of grace. With all his picturesque location of heaven and hell, he catches a glimpse of modern Broad Churchism, and recognizes the destiny of the soul as established automatically:

Perhaps it may be furnished with some new vehicle of more refined matter; perhaps it may abide where death finds it — in anywhereness or nowhereness, not changing its place but only its manner of thinking and acting and its mode of existence, and without removal finding itself in heaven or hell according to its consciousness of its own deserts.<sup>1</sup>

This kindness of heart obliged him to make a survey for himself of the strait and narrow way and to come to the following conclusion: "I am persuaded there is a breadth in the narrow road to heaven, and persons may travel more than seven abreast in it."<sup>2</sup>

One cannot claim for Watts a place in the first rank of poets. He only occasionally steps into the second rank. He is not likely to be among those whom we take down from our shelves to read in the half-hour when we crave to have the drab dulness of ordinary life gilded with an inspiring glow. Yet when we take his hand, he may lead us into the

<sup>1</sup> Southey, *Life of Isaac Watts*, in *H. L.*, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

domain of the eternal, and as we behold him kneeling there in joy and awe, we become aware that we are in the presence of God. He was the first Englishman who set the gospel to music, and in his special field of song he has never been surpassed.

## V

### PERPETUA AND FELICITAS

“**T**HE noble army of martyrs praise Thee!”—so in all ages has sung, not only the Christian Church, but the pious of every religion, as they contemplated those who suffered for conscience sake. For whether the beliefs for which they suffered were or were not those of the beholder, the steadfast giving of all has won respect and admiration from persecutors as well as friends.

There is hardly a more moving story of martyrdom than is contained in “The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas”; an account, the historicity of which is confirmed by scholars, of the deaths of two women and three men in North Africa in the year 202 (or 203) A.D. That the women only are named in the title may be owing to the unusualness at this time of female martyrdom; indeed, this was probably the first case then known to the Church in Africa, though Blandina and her mistress had suffered shortly before in the persecution at Lyons and Vienne, and Agathonike at Pergamos. But this account is in one respect unique. We have often wished we could converse with the martyrs before their end and learn how they regarded it. That is what we do in this document. For it contains

a journal written by Perpetua from the time of her arrest up to the day before her execution, with a short narration of a vision of his by Saturus, another of the martyrs, while an eye-witness gives an account of the execution itself.

The history is found in different versions in several Latin MSS, whose text suggests that they have all been taken from a Greek original. A document which may have been such an original has recently been discovered and edited by Dr. J. Rendel Harris. The Greek text, together with a longer and a shorter version of two Latin texts, has been published by him in the Haverford College Studies, No. 3, while a translation by Seth K. Gifford is published in the same series of Studies, No. 4. A translation by Reverend R. E. Wallis may be found in Appendix 5, volume III, of the Ante-Nicene Fathers.

Vibia Perpetua was a resident of the town of Thuburbo near Carthage. She was of noble family and good education, twenty-two years old, married, and the mother of a boy, at this time apparently less than a year old. Judging from a mosaic portrait of her in the archbishop's palace at Ravenna, she must have been beautiful.<sup>1</sup> Felicitas was her maid-companion, that relation which we find common in Shakespeare's plays. She too was young and married, and became a mother while in prison before her

<sup>1</sup> Copies of these mosaic portraits of Perpetua and Felicitas are given by Dr. Harris in Haverford College Studies, No. 3.

execution. Their husbands are not referred to, which may suggest that they were not Christians, or even that it was they who first gave information against the women. Together with the women there were arrested three men — Revocatus, possibly a brother of Felicitas, Saturninus, and Secundus. The last-named died in prison before the games were celebrated, but his place was filled by the voluntary surrender of Saturus, a deacon, who was absent when the arrests were made. We are inclined to ask why he should have given himself up when he was apparently safe from the demands of the law. But many of the early Christians regarded martyrdom from a point of view opposite to ours. To us it is an experience of dread, a necessary duty perhaps, but to be feared and avoided whenever honestly possible. To the early Christian it was an opportunity to be coveted and eagerly seized, for it ensured not only high honor in the Christian community but certain entrance into heaven. What were a few minutes or hours of bodily pain compared with seeing the shining gates of Paradise flung wide, and hearing the "Well done, good and faithful servant"? So Saturus, on his return from his absence, may well have hastened to the authorities and denounced himself, demanding to be included in the little band for whom arrest was plainly known to mean death. Before all of them was the sight of the great multitude which the Seer of the Revelation beheld in



heaven, when one of the Elders asked him, “‘What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?’ and I said unto him, ‘Sir, thou knowest.’ And he said to me, ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. . . . They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, . . . for the Lamb . . . shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

The technical charge against Perpetua and her friends was refusing to burn incense in honor of the emperor. Since the time of the first emperor, Augustus, the divine right of kings had been established in a form essentially the same as that which it had in Europe in later centuries. While later times, however, were content with asserting that the king can do no wrong, Roman law declared in addition that the emperor was divine by descent. Beneath this apparently materialistic assertion there was, moreover, a truth which enabled the belief to survive for several centuries. That which the Empire stood for, the stable order of things, civilization, law, the peace of the world, this was regarded as an embodiment of the *genius* of the emperor, his spirit. How largely this was thought of as personal it is difficult to say. But it was the bond

<sup>1</sup> Rev., vii, 13-17.

of Roman unity, loyalty to which was the duty of every Roman citizen and subject. To refuse to acknowledge this bond was therefore treason, and the form of public acknowledgment which was adopted was the burning of a few grains of incense on an altar before the statue of the emperor. This was the test which separated those Christians who cast the incense into the fire from those who refused and knowingly went to the beasts and the gladiator's sword. But why should they refuse? one may ask. To burn a few grains of incense was a trivial act, which left the rest of life untouched. Moreover, it was external, it did not involve one's inner attitude. Could not one say, "This no more affects my real self than waving a fan. I can be just as much a Christian after it as before. Christianity is not a gesture of the body but an attitude of soul. Christ, my Lord, I can worship and follow still"? Could not one say that? Many a one did say it and relapsed into safe oblivion here, leaving his full account to be settled at the Day of Judgment. Perhaps they were wise, as many of them were, no doubt, conscientious. But men give their real acclaims, not to wisdom, but to heroism. Of those who listened thus to the persuading arguments of their over-anxious relatives, history has not preserved the names, but it has carefully cherished the name of everyone who turned his back on the altar and proclaimed boldly, "*Christianus sum!*" For it is not the size of

a test which counts, but its weight. If two parties agree to call an act as trivial as tearing a bit of paper a test, then its decision is as weighty and final as the most thunderous sentence of a judge. There was in reality a difference between a Christian and a pagan; their ways, thoughts, ideals, loyalties were different. To confuse a fact with the consequences of the fact, to deny the fact because of its consequences, was not only bad logic but soul-damage. "Can you call that thing there anything but a pitcher?" asked Perpetua of her dissuading father. "No," said he. "Neither can I call myself anything else than what I am, a Christian."

All the members of Perpetua's family seem to have sympathized with her except her father. He came to see her several times after her arrest and besought her with tears and denunciations and entreaties, for the sake of his hoary head, for the sake of her child, for her own sake, to recant and save herself from the dreadful fate which awaited her. But she calmly turned from him with his "devil's arguments," as she called them, and when he gave up coming for a while, she remarked with a touch of humorous satisfaction, "Then I gave thanks to the Lord, and his absence became a source of consolation to me." She is thoroughly feminine, this daintily bred girl, afraid of the dark, repelled by the crowd and the closeness of the prison, anxious for her child. The local church contributed to their support while under arrest, and

two of their friends hired the jailer to transfer them to a milder quarter of the prison and to permit her to have her baby with her. Then the child, which had drooped for lack of his mother's nourishment, revived; "And forthwith I grew strong and was relieved from distress and anxiety about my infant and the dungeon became to me as it were a palace, so that I preferred being there to being elsewhere."

Reading this account, we are struck with the nobility of human character it reveals, the sturdy loyalty to conviction, the courage that rises to joy, the triumphant dominance of the spirit over the body. Yet to the author and those of his time these marvels are not the chief attraction, nor probably the chief motive of the writer in recording the history. To him the centre of interest seemed "the more eminent visions of the blessed martyrs, Saturus and Perpetua, which they themselves committed to writing." Throughout the world of former times visions had a significance which since the coming of the scientific spirit they have largely lost. Wherever dualism influenced thought, as almost everywhere it did, the conviction was deep that God and man were such opposites that what was divine was non-human and what was human must be non-divine. The result was not only that man must empty himself of what was characteristic of him in order to approach God, but that events in which no human agency could be traced were regarded as directly

divine. Visions and dreams were therefore prized as especially significant, since they were immediate communications from God and marks of peculiar favor to those to whom they were vouchsafed. So St. Paul, in going over his credentials as an apostle, enumerates his Hebrew descent and the hardships and sufferings he has undergone in the Christian service. But this, he says, is after all a fool-way of counting, which is "not expedient"; he will come to the real thing, to visions and revelations of the Lord. And then, with the confused utterance with which a man must always try to express his deepest experiences, he tells of one or more visions which he had had, which were so wonderful and precious that there was danger that he should be "exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations."<sup>1</sup> The belief in the significance of dreams is still prevalent to-day. In early ages they were regarded as almost the sole avenue of communication from God, except in case of those especially favored persons whom He endowed with the insight of prophecy. It was long after the days of St. Paul and Perpetua that the discovery that God speaks to men through the channels of ordinary life became the common property of Christian thought, although the Psalmist had thrown out this wealthy knowledge centuries before. "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" he exclaims, "how great is the sum of

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor., xii, 1-8.

them!" The following verse seems to indicate that he has in mind particularly the dreams which are God's well-known means of communication. Yet these are not for him the sole means, for even in the daytime he and God are together: "When I awake I am still with Thee."<sup>1</sup>

But to Perpetua and her friends dreams and visions are of profound significance and comfort. While she is in prison her brother suggests that, as she is now so highly honored as to be within sight of probable martyrdom, it is likely that her request might be granted if she should ask for a vision to tell her whether the result would be in fact a martyrdom. She accepts the suggestion, and is so confident that a vision will be vouchsafed, that she promises to give him the intelligence to-morrow. And the next day she does; it is to be—in the language of the early Church—a passion.

This was not her only vision. But before another came, there came a tremendous reality. One day, while they were at dinner, they were summoned to the office of the proconsul, and there, after refusing to sacrifice, they were condemned to the wild beasts. After which, she notes, "With joy we went down to the prison." Other comforting visions now followed; one in regard to a brother of hers who had died young and for whose welfare in the other world she yearningly prays, and one in which she

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 139, 17-18.



fight with a huge negro and overcomes him, and so has confidence that in the amphitheatre she will overcome her spiritual enemy.

Where that amphitheatre was, is not certain. So small a town as Thuburbo is not likely to have had one. Mention is made of the party of martyrs being previously taken to a camp of soldiers; but in regard to that the same unlikelihood would hold. The probability is that the exhibition took place in Carthage, especially as it was intended to be, not a mere execution, but a high festival in honor of the emperor's birthday. As we walk to-day among the ruins of Carthage we may therefore legitimately see Perpetua and her friends entering the arena.

About fifty years before this time there had appeared in Phrygia Montanus, a Christian reformer. He was the first of that long series of those whom the Church sooner or later declared to be heretics, whose main tenet was that Christianity must be a religion of the spirit. This involved not only the claim of its leaders to inspiration but the corollary that ecclesiasticism with its priests and its ritual was useless and even harmful. If every one could be in continual communion with God, what was the need of intermediaries? While the Church emphasized the worship of Christ, Montanism emphasized the worship of the Holy Spirit. Its influence was now spreading through the Christian world, particularly in Africa. Tertullian of Carthage, the first great writer



of Latin Christianity, became interested in it. He had been ordained a presbyter by the church in Carthage, and was married, a fact which afterwards caused scandal to Church historians. He had visited Rome, and found conditions there quite different from those which Christian morality and the life of the spirit required and on which Montanism laid the stress of importance. He was now, in 202 A.D., prominent in the church at Carthage and in warm sympathy with Perpetua and her friends, who were Montanists. Very probably addressed to these was a tract, "Ad Martyras," which he put out about this time. And it was about this time also that he himself became a Montanist and the passionate and brilliant champion of that movement. It is not improbable that the stirring scene in the amphitheatre may have been the final argument of convincing weight which led him to set his face against what he regarded as a degenerate form of Christianity.

In his tract "Ad Martyras" he exhorts "the Blessed Martyrs Designate" to fill their minds with the thoughts of things above, and then their prison conditions will be of trifling importance; nay, more, they will be felt as a gain.

Wherefore, O blessed, you may regard yourselves as having been translated from a prison to, we may say, a place of safety. It is full of darkness, but ye yourselves are light; it has bonds, but God has made you free. Unpleasant exhalations are there, but ye are an odor of

sweetness. The judge is daily looked for, but ye shall judge the judges themselves. Sadness may be there for him who sighs for the world's enjoyments. The Christian outside the prison has renounced the world, but in the prison he has renounced a prison too. It is of no consequence where you are in the world — you who are not of it. And if you have lost some of life's sweets, it is the way of business to suffer present loss that afterwards may be larger. . . . Let us drop the name of prison; let us call it a place of retirement. Though the body is shut up, though the flesh is confined, all things are open to the spirit. In spirit then roam abroad; in spirit walk about, not setting before you shady paths or long colonnades, but the way which leads to God. As often as your footsteps are there in spirit, so often you will not be in bonds. Where thy heart shall be, there will be thy treasure.<sup>1</sup>

Perpetua's journal is so human, so vivid and moving, that it may not be superfluous to give it in full. It is as follows:

While we were still under watch my father attempted to persuade me, for the sake of his affection for me, to renounce my proposed confession. And I said to him, "Father, do you see that household utensil lying there?" and he replied, "I do." "Can you call that thing there anything but a pitcher?" "No," he said. "Neither can I call myself anything else than what I am, a Christian." Then my father, provoked at my words, rushed at me as if he would tear my eyes out. But he

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Martyras*, chap. 2.

only cried aloud and went away vanquished, carried away with his devil's arguments. Then, while he was from home for a few days, I gave thanks to the Lord and his absence became a source of consolation to me. In the meantime we were baptized; and I was prompted by the Holy Spirit to ask nothing from the water of baptism except patient endurance of the flesh.

After a few days we were cast into prison, and I was very much afraid. How dreadful a day! for never had I seen such darkness and excessive heat. For the prison was crowded with a multitude of people, chiefly on account of false accusations of the soldiers. Besides all these things, I was distressed on account of my infant child. Then Tertius and Pomponius, blessed deacons who ministered to us, arranged by paying gratuities that we should be transferred to a milder quarter of the prison. Then all went out and attended to their wants; I suckled my child, which was now enfeebled with hunger; I talked with my mother, I cheered my brother, I commended to them my child. But I was consumed with grief because I saw them grieving on my account. Such solicitude I suffered many days. But I obtained leave for my child to remain in the prison with me; and then I grew strong and was freed from distress and anxiety about my child, and lo! the prison became to me a palace, so that I preferred to be there to being elsewhere.

Then my brother said to me, "My dear sister, you are already in a position of great dignity, and are such that you may ask for a vision, so that you may know whether this is to result in a passion or an escape." And I, who knew that I was privileged to converse with the Lord, whose kindnesses I had found to be so great,

boldly promised him and said, "To-morrow I will tell you." So I asked, and this was what was shown me. I saw a ladder of brass of marvellous size, whose top reached up even to heaven, but so narrow that persons could only ascend it one by one. And on either side of the ladder there were fixed swords and spears and hooks and knives and spikes of every kind, so that, if one went up carelessly without looking, he would be torn to pieces and his flesh would stick on the points. And at the foot of the ladder was a dragon, exceeding great, lying in wait for those going up and terrifying them so that they might not dare to ascend. But Saturus went up, for he voluntarily surrendered himself on our account, not having been present when we were taken prisoners. Now when he came to the top of the ladder, he turned and said, "Perpetua, I am waiting for you; but be careful that the dragon does not bite you." And I said, "Nay, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall not hurt me." And as if the dragon feared me, he quietly presented his head at the foot of the ladder, and as I trod upon the first step I trod upon his head. And I went up, and I saw a very great garden, and in the midst of the garden a white-haired man of exceeding great stature, sitting in shepherd's dress, milking sheep. And many thousands stood about him, in white raiment. And lifting his head, he beheld me and said, "Welcome, my daughter." And he called me, and as he was milking he gave me a little cake of cheese, and I received it with folded hands and ate it, and all who stood around said, "Amen!" And at the sound of their voices I awoke, still tasting a sweetness which I cannot describe. And I related the vision to my brother, and we perceived

that it was to be a passion, and from that time I ceased to have any hope in this life.

After a few days we learned that we were to have a hearing. My father also arrived from his long journey, worn out, and coming to me urged me to abandon my confession, saying, "Have pity, my daughter, on my gray hairs, have pity on your father, if indeed I am worthy to be called father by you. Remember that with these hands I have brought you up to this flower of your age and preferred you to all your brothers. Do not bring shame on me in the sight of men. Have regard to your brothers, have regard to your mother and your mother's sister, have regard to your son, who will not be able to live after you. Lay aside your courage and do not bring us all to destruction, for none of us will ever speak freely again if any harm should come to you."

So said my father in his affection, kissing my hands and throwing himself at my feet, and with tears he called me, not Daughter, but Lady. And I grieved at my father's state, that he alone of my whole family did not rejoice at my suffering. And I comforted him, saying, "At the judge's tribunal whatever God wills will happen, for be sure that we shall be not in our own power but in that of God." And he departed from me in sorrow.

Another day, while we were at dinner, we were suddenly hurried away to our hearing; and when we had come into the market-place, at once a report went about the neighboring parts and there ran together a very great crowd. And when we came to the tribunal, the others were examined, and confessed. And as I was about to be examined, my father appeared with my boy and drew me aside and said in a supplicating tone,

"Sacrifice, out of pity for the babe!" Then Hilarianus, the procurator, who had just received the power of life and death in place of the proconsul Minucius Timinianus, who had died, said, "Spare the gray hairs of your father, spare the infancy of your child; offer sacrifice for the welfare of the emperors." And I replied, "I will not sacrifice." Hilarianus said, "Are you a Christian?" and I answered "I am a Christian."

When my father kept trying to seduce me from the faith, Hilarianus ordered him to be put out, and some of the guards beat him with their rods. And it grieved me as if I had been beaten myself, for I pitied his wretched old age. Then the procurator condemned us all to the beasts, and with joy we went down to the prison. Now since the child was fed at my breast and was accustomed to stay with me in prison, I sent Pomponius the deacon to my father to ask for the babe. But he refused to give it up. Yet, as God ordered, the child from that time did not desire the breast, nor did my breast cause me trouble, in order perhaps that I might not be troubled both by anxiety for the child and pain in the breasts.

After a few days, while we were all praying, suddenly, in the midst of our prayer, I cried out and called the name of Dinocrates. And I was surprised, for that name had not come into my mind until then, and it saddened me to remember his end. But knowing that I was worthy to make a petition for him, I began at once to pray to the Lord for him mightily and with groanings. And immediately that very night there was shown to me this vision. I saw Dinocrates coming forth from a dark place, where there were also many others burning and parched



with thirst, his raiment foul, his countenance pale, and the wound on his face which he had when he died. For this, Dinocrates, my brother according to the flesh, had sickened and died when he was seven years old, his face mortified with gangrene so that his death was loathsome to all. I saw now between him and me a great space, so that neither of us could approach the other. And in the place where my brother was, there was a fountain filled with water, but its rim was higher than the boy could reach. To this Dinocrates was stretching up, trying to drink. And I grieved because, though the fountain was full of water, the child was unable to drink on account of the height of the rim. And I awoke, and knew that my brother was in distress; but I trusted that my prayer would bring help to his sufferings, and I prayed for him every day until we were transferred to the other prison, that of the tribune, for it was near the camp where we were to fight with beasts. For Cæsar's birthday was about to be celebrated. So I prayed earnestly for my brother day and night, groaning and weeping that he might be granted to me.

Then in the evening, while we remained in the stocks, there was shown to me this vision. I saw that the place where I had seen Dinocrates was now bright, and Dinocrates was refreshed and in beautiful raiment with his body clean, and where the wound had been I saw a scar; and the rim of the fountain, from which water was flowing continually, was brought down to his waist, and upon the rim was a golden cup full, and Dinocrates came and began to drink from it, and the cup did not become empty. And when he was satisfied, he went away from the water and began to play joyously after

the manner of children. Then I awoke, and understood that he was delivered from the place of punishment.

After a few days Pudens, a soldier, who had charge of the prison, began to regard us with much esteem, perceiving that the great power of God was in us, and he admitted many brethren to see us, so that they and we were mutually refreshed. And when the day of the exhibition drew near, my father came to me worn with grief and began to pluck out his beard and throw himself on the ground, and lying on his face, to reproach his years with such words and accusations as might move all creation. And I grieved for his unhappy old age.

The day before that on which we were to fight, I saw in a vision that Pomponius the deacon came to the gate of the prison and knocked vehemently. And I went out and opened it for him. He was clothed in shining raiment, his loins girded, and many-colored sandals on his feet; and he said to me, "Perpetua, we are waiting for you; come!" and he held out his hand to me, and we began to go through rough and crooked places, and with difficulty came to the amphitheatre. And he led me into the midst of the arena and said, "Fear not; I am here with you and will share your struggle." And lo! I saw a very great throng gazing eagerly upon the spectacle. And knowing that I had been condemned to the wild beasts, I wondered that they were not let loose upon me. Then there came forth against me an Egyptian, horrible in appearance, with his backers, to fight with me. And there came to me a youth most fair in form, radiant with beauty, and with him other beautiful youths, to help and support me; and I was stripped and became a man, and my assistants began to rub me with

oil, as is the custom in contests; and on the other hand I beheld the Egyptian rolling himself in the dust. Then came forth a man of wonderful size, so that he even overtopped the top of the amphitheatre, and he wore a loose tunic and a purple robe with two bands over the middle of the breast; he had also many-colored sandals of gold and silver, and had a rod like a judge or trainer of gladiators and a branch with golden apples. He commanded silence and said, "If this Egyptian conquer this woman, he shall kill her with his sword; but if she shall conquer him, she shall receive this branch." Then he withdrew, and we advanced against each other and began to deal out blows. And when my adversary tried to seize my feet, I kicked him and smote him in the face. And lo! I was lifted up in the air and began to strike him as if I were not treading on the ground. But seeing that I did not even yet hurt him, I clasped my hands so as to lock my fingers together, and seized his head and hurled him face downwards, and I trampled on his head. Then all the throng began to shout and my supporters to exult, and coming to the judge I received the branch, and he kissed me and said, "Daughter, peace be with you!" And we began to go with applause to the so-called Gate of Life. Then I awoke, and perceived that my approaching conflict was to be, not with beasts, but with the devil. And I knew I should conquer him. These things I have written up to the day before the exhibition. What shall take place in the amphitheatre, let him describe who will.

Here ends the journal. There is now nothing to do but wait for the morrow, calmly, confidently,

triumphantly. But before the exhibition Saturus also has a vision. It is now all over, the beasts and the more savage shouting throng, and the martyrs are borne upwards into heaven. There, as they recognize friends and martyrs who have gained glory before them, while they bow before the throne of God, Saturus turns and says, "Perpetua, you have what you have wished"; and she said to me, 'Thanks be to God that, joyous as I was in the flesh, I am now more joyous'; and we were all fed by an indescribably sweet odor which satisfied us. Then I joyously awoke."

Joyousness! it is the wonderful, triumphant note which runs throughout the whole history. There is more; there is even mirth. For as they are sitting at their last meal, curious crowds press in to gaze at them. But they laugh at the curiosity of the people and Saturus says to the gazers, "Is n't to-morrow enough for you? Look at our faces carefully so that you may recognize them at the Day of Judgment." And when the jailer is inclined to skimp their fare for fear they may poison themselves through the connivance of friends, Perpetua says to him, "Why don't you allow us to get strong? Is n't it to your credit, the fatter we come to the arena?" How many a one to-day who is facing a surgical operation with the blessing of anæsthetics and the promise of renewed health, goes to the operating room without a tithe of the calmness and cheer with which these

martyrs faced the arena! For "the day of their victory shone forth, and they went out from the prison to the amphitheatre as if to heaven, glad and radiant in countenance, their hearts beating with joy rather than with fear." Perpetua followed "with placid look and with step and gait as a matron of Christ, casting down the lustre of her eyes from the gaze of all." She sang psalms while the men exchanged words with the spectators. As they passed before the seat of the procurator who had been their judge, they shouted at him, "Thou us, and thee God!" This enraged the crowd, who demanded that they should be scourged; and as the whips fell, they rejoiced that thereby their kinship with their Lord's sufferings was more fully established.

When the beasts were admitted, they were slow to attack and the spectacle languished. Saturus and Revocatus were teased by a bear, and when a wild boar was brought up against them, it turned upon its keeper and wounded him so that he died the next day. Then Saturus was bound and laid on the ground close to the cage of the bear; but the animal refused to leave its cage. Perpetua and Felicitas were stripped of their clothes and led in. But this stirred in the multitude some sense of shame and protesting murmurs, so that they were withdrawn and brought in dressed in underclothes but with nets wrapped around them, rendering them helpless for defence. Then a savage cow was turned loose upon them.

Perpetua was tossed and fell on her side; but when she saw that her tunic was torn and left her body exposed, she sat up, fumbled for a pin, and, woman-like, pinned the rent together. Then she bound up her hair; for it was not becoming for a martyr to suffer with hair disheveled, lest in her glory she should seem to be mourning. Meanwhile Felicitas had been tossed, and Perpetua went to her and lifted her up. The crowd now clamored that this was enough for them, and they were led toward the gate of exit. And while standing here, Perpetua, rousing herself from a daze or an ecstasy of spirit, said, "When are we to be thrown to that cow?" and when she was told what had happened, she could not believe it until her own wounds and the rents in her dress were pointed out to her. She then turned to her brother and a friend who was with him — for they were allowed to speak to the prisoners — and said, "Stand fast in the faith and love one another, all of you, and don't be dismayed by my sufferings."

The intermission was not a pardon; it was only a short reprieve. For while they waited there, Saturnus said to one of the soldiers who guarded him, "I have not been touched by any of the beasts, but I hope I shall be destroyed by one bite of the leopard." It was as he wished; for he was immediately thrown to the leopard, which with one bite drenched him with so much blood that the spectators derisively



called it a baptism and shouted, "Washed and saved, washed and saved!"

But the exhibition could not end without the death of the martyrs. So as the beasts had refused to be executioners, the professional gladiators were called in. When the condemned group heard what was next to be required of them, they walked of their own accord to the middle of the arena, that the whole populace might see. Standing there, they all kissed one another, recalling the kiss of peace with which the worship of the Christians was always concluded, and then awaited the thrust of the gladiator's sword. When the executioner came to Perpetua, his hand fumbled, either because he was unskilled or because he was unmanned by her beauty and her bearing, and his sword barely pierced her ribs. In her pain she cried out, and seized his hand and brought it to her throat, where it finally did its office.

Here ends the touching and inspiring history. But the author must break out into a panegyric on the heroic men and women whose triumphal progress he has been narrating:

"O most brave and blessed martyrs! O truly called and chosen unto the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ! How shall we extol or bless you, most noble soldiers! Surely if ancient writings are read to the edification of the Church, not less worthy to be read is the all-virtuous course of the blessed martyrs,

that it may testify to the continual operation of one and the same Holy Spirit even until now — those blessed martyrs through whom we ascribe glory to the Father of the worlds, together with His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, to whom be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

## VI

### MANI AND DUALISM

IN the year 276 A.D. there was crucified in Persia a man whose religious ideas were destined profoundly to affect Christendom. That man, Mani, had been oppressed by the self-contradictory nature of the world. It was not merely the fact that he found the world neither bad nor good but both. Many a common man before him had seen that. But while the common man had thrown his belief upon the one side or the other, Mani declared that this dualism was in the nature of things, and eternal. Yet he was not sufficiently a Hegelian to understand the principle of the union of opposites. The opposites into which he divided his universe remained distinct each from the other, and consequently there was only warfare between them — a warfare which was eternal. Manichæism inherited much of the theology of Zoroastrianism; it agreed with it in holding matter to be essentially evil, the kingdom of Ahriman; in which light, the kingdom of Ormazd, is imprisoned. Its struggles to be free constitute that world-pulse which is the condition of things we see. Asceticism, therefore, the suppression of the body and its desires, is the holy path for one who would seek union with the Divine.

This sharp division of the world between the two opposing forces furnished a problem by no means ancient only. A small boy, theologically inclined, of our own day put the question thus: "If all the good in me is God's, and all the bad in me is the devil's, where do I come in?" This young Manichee did not know that he was tugging at the greatest of all human problems, the problem of personality.

In the views of Mani just mentioned there was little that was original. But they were an upswelling instance of that dualistic thought which was even then age-old. Manichæism summed up ideas which had long been current, and rendered them attractive by its stern moral demands and by the martyrdom of its founder. It penetrated Western Christianity, and for nine years claimed St. Augustine as one of its disciples; and though the Church endeavored time after time to suppress it, it appeared among the Bogomiles, the Cathari, the Albigenses, possibly the Waldenses, and other sects which the Catholic Church denounced as heretical, and persecuted. Its influence upon orthodoxy, however, was far greater than that of any of these sects; for it strengthened an antithesis which theology had established long before. That the divine is the non-human, the human the non-divine, is a conviction which goes back to very early ages. As soon as men began to reflect upon God, it was His otherness that struck them. The chief thing about Him was His difference from

themselves; whatever they were, He was not. They were limited; He was infinite. They were weak; He was mighty. Will, with them, could accomplish little; will, with Him, was omnipotent and wholly arbitrary. This perception of the transcendence of God, as it came to be termed, was most important, for it was the first step in the recognition of a God at all. Out of the undistinguished welter of things came a perception of the difference between light and darkness, and men, like God in the Hebrew tradition, saw the light, that it was good. They looked off to a Being infinite, omnipotent, eternal, and found in Him something greater than themselves, something durable in the flux of time. He was far beyond and above them; and this lifting of the eyes was the precious first step in soul-development.

But because God was beyond and above, He was far distant. A gulf separated men from Him. They could not get at Him; He was inapproachable. And unless there was some connection between Him and them, what was the use of having Him? He must be brought somehow into relation with human affairs; not so much He with them — for power over men, of course, He had — as they with Him. They must be able to touch Him, even if it were but the hem of His garment. So intermediaries were conceived who should bridge the gulf — mediators, media of communication, messengers, angels. These were regarded by the Gnostics as emanations, portions of

the Divine thrown out, as it were, by the Absolute. They then might become independent, much as the Deists of the eighteenth century regarded the laws of nature. These angels, messengers, were the means by which God was kept informed of the doings of earth, and men could present their case in heaven; though the angels sometimes needed a ladder, such as Jacob saw, to get from the one place to the other.

That again was a great step, when God was brought into touch with humanity. Even though it necessitated special times, special places, special agents, which were not always at hand, still God was approachable and apprehensible, and that was of infinite worth. Meanwhile there was growing the conviction that God liked goodness, truth, justice, uprightness, better than their opposites; and gradually, very gradually, these, rather than temples made with hands, came to be thought of as the meeting-place between man and God. This was the severe and infinitely precious lesson which the Hebrews learned during the Exile. It could not be, they thought, that they had left their God behind in Jerusalem. He must in some way be with them still. Their prophets assured them that this was the case, and that God Himself proclaimed it so: "I dwell in the high and holy place; but with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit."<sup>1</sup> "I will put my law into their inward parts and write it in their hearts."<sup>2</sup> And in their

<sup>1</sup> Isa., lvii, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Jer., xxxi, 33.



distant Babylonian home they ventured to take the comfort of it, and since they were cut off from offering sacrifice and incense, they prayed God to take the will for the deed: "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."<sup>1</sup>

Here then, in man's higher nature, was a region into which he could go and always find God. But this was surely not a kind of neutral ground, into which the parties came from opposite sides. Love, truth, wisdom, goodness, these were more than rooms for conversation. They were personal; they could not be conceived as other than aspects of personality. So, a century or two before the Christian era, wisdom was depicted as a personal companion of God: "The Lord possessed me," they heard wisdom declaring, "in the beginning of His way, before His works of old; then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."<sup>2</sup> A century or two after the Christian era the personalization was completed. Love, goodness, wisdom, truth were no longer regarded by clear Christian thinkers as abstract qualities or companions of God; they were aspects of God Himself. It was not merely, God has love, but "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God."<sup>3</sup>

This was the great discovery of the first Day of

<sup>1</sup> Ps. 141, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. viii, 22, 30.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John, iv, 16.

Pentecost. A multitude of differing people found themselves saying the same thing, filled with the same spirit. It was the spirit of devotion to their master Christ, and therefore was the same spirit which animated him. And suddenly it flashed upon them that the spirit of Jesus was Jesus himself. Dead though he was, he was with them in a form as truly personal, as truly himself, as when he walked the fields of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem; yes, even more truly, for now, as he had said, this spirit would be with them always and their joy no man could take from them. It came to be the distinguishing mark of a Christian that he had received the spirit; and the spirit was not something which might ultimately bring them to the Lord, but the Lord, said St. Paul, is the spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Of course there were many and earnest Christians in the first century, such as the authors of the Synoptic Gospels and St. James, who were incapable of rising to this wealth of apprehension of their Master. To them he was a being external to themselves, whose memory they revered, whose commands they followed, but wholly external and therefore in the past. For those who saw more deeply, Christ had gone within and become part of the soul's very being. The Pauline theology and that of the Fourth Gospel are filled with this thought of the identification of the life of the soul with the very presence of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor., iii, 17.

Christ is not only an objective historic being who once lived and died, but he is the subjective principle of life within the soul. In him, in God whom he represents, we live and move and have our being. The hope of glory is Christ within you.<sup>1</sup>

This intimacy of union is unintelligible to one who tries to apprehend it as theology only. But to one who recognizes the conditions of daily life as interpretive of eternal processes, it becomes gloriously illuminative. To exhibit such union the best magnifying glass is marriage, where this close relationship speaks in the happy voice of the truly married husband or wife.

Dualism's method of uniting the human and the divine is quantitative. A certain amount of the human in one side of the scales displaces just so much of the divine on the other side. This is commercialism in a region in which commercialism is impossible. But the union between God and man must rather be qualitative. If we were to choose a word for the method, it would perhaps be "interpenetration." And in order to discover what that is, we should turn to the instances of it by which we are surrounded. The thought of one mind flows into another, not by displacing an equivalent bulk there, but by penetrating it, so that it becomes interwoven with the mind invaded, while at the same time it belongs as fully to the individual owner. So the

<sup>1</sup> Col., i, 27.

whole range of the personality of one passes into, fills, and becomes part of the personality of another.

So close we dwelt, we hardly stood apart.  
Before one spoke, subtly the other heard,  
As hand serves hand without the need of word  
In quick response, as pulse keeps touch with heart.

It was such a union which Jesus desired that his disciples might have with him: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, are in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us. All mine are Thine and Thine are mine; I in them and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."<sup>1</sup> Such a thought emphasizes the misuse of the passage, according to which Jesus is supposed to be setting forth the importance of corporate unity, as it is called, of having but one ecclesiastical institution. But the union he desired with his disciples was to be like that between him and his Father, which was certainly not institutional. His words here refer to a union the very opposite of that contemplated by those who use them as an authorization of their demand for church uniformity.

The line between different stages of being is everywhere difficult, sometimes impossible, to draw. Just where is the dividing line between the plant and the animal? between the animal and the human being? between a man and his friend? between the soul and God? Such lines are like the geographer's

<sup>1</sup> St. John, xvii, 10, 21, 23.



which science seems now tending — namely, that matter is a form of mind. Modern thought seems justifying us in saying that, as God has only His own substance out of which to create, He is forever forming the world out of Himself by an act of transubstantiation, and saying, “Take, eat; this is my body.” But Hebrew religion in its moments of clearest insight set itself against dualism. The creation, it declared, was not the work of an inferior deity, but both worlds, those of spirit and of matter, were called into being by one and the same infinite God. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”<sup>1</sup> The prophet of the Exile was so daring that he did not hesitate to solve the dualistic problem by declaring Jahveh to be the author of evil itself: “I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things.”<sup>2</sup> The prosaic mind of the ecclesiastical chronicler, however, accepted the ordinary dualistic opinion as the more pious. King Asa, he says, was diseased in his feet; “Yet in his disease he sought not unto the Lord but to the physicians.” The chronicler adds significantly, “And Asa slept with his fathers.”<sup>3</sup>

Yet in spite of the Hebraic rejection of dualism, it was impossible for the early Church to conceive the relation of Jesus to God on other than a dualistic basis. Starting from the same ground, — the essentially evil nature of matter, — two opposite schools

<sup>1</sup> Gen., i, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Isa., xlv, 7.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Chron., xvi, 12, 13.



of thought arose. The one, that of Cerinthus, held that Jesus, as the true son of Joseph and Mary, was, like his fellow-men, tainted with sin, though more righteous than others. The Divine Logos was at his baptism joined with him; and these two continued together in the human body of Jesus until at his death he cast off his flesh and became pure spirit. Dualism was thus seated in the very person of Christ. The other school, that of the Docetists, denied altogether the fleshly — that is, evil — nature of Jesus, and maintained that he was human in appearance only, having no real human nature but a wholly spiritual one. This too established a dualism in Christ, through the failure of the different elements in him to constitute a unity. Round this problem thus insoluble — to keep Jesus in touch with humanity, to assert his freedom from the taint of sin, and to proclaim at the same time the difference between human and divine and the inherent evil of the human — over and about this impossible problem the currents of thought flowed for centuries hopelessly. The Church itself, though combating the heresies in this respect, was not more successful in freeing itself from the limiting premise of dualism. The Symbol of Chalcedon aimed to clear up the matter, but left it thus: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood . . . to be acknowledged in two na-

tures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union but rather the property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence." This asserts the end desired but does not show how it can be reached. Ideas, speculations, fancies, from sources Christian, Jewish, Oriental, classical, magical, all combined in the many and strange systems which came to be known as Gnosticism. Dualism stamped itself deep upon orthodox Christianity, and it came to be taken for granted that there was a necessary opposition between faith and reason, grace and nature, supernatural and natural, the priest and the man, the Church and the world.

Such opinions could not remain speculative only. They involved a denial of that which to the author of the Johannine Epistles was life's most precious possession — the conviction that Jesus was the authentic revelation of the infinite God. For such a denial gave birth to a disbelief in any ultimate standard, and this resulted in antinomianism and immorality, and to a disregard of the corporate nature of religion, which then became gross selfishness. One who can see Jesus Christ and yet not welcome in him the ideal of God and man, can do so, in this author's view, only by denying his own moral perceptions. And so he bursts out into the exclamation which is the central thought of all his Epistles, "Who

is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?"<sup>1</sup>

No intelligible thought of the Incarnation was possible as long as human and divine were regarded as opposite factors which must somehow be made to combine, though, like oil and water, each persisted in retaining its separateness. It was only when men came to meditate on the penetrative power of personality — how mine becomes thine and thine mine — that they came to understand how God could mingle with man and flow into him and how man could breathe-in God, and yet each be fully himself. Only then is divinity seen to be humanity raised to its highest power and Jesus to be essentially human and essentially Divine. Because he was very man of very man he was very God of very God. The manner of his birth therefore has nothing whatever to do with his divinity; whether it was after the common course or was exceptional, is wholly irrelevant. A virgin birth is not necessarily excluded, but the question has no importance. It is important only as a support to the view that divinity is apart from humanity. Even here the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is of course ineffective; for in order to cut the connection with the sinful humanity of Adam's race there would be necessary, not only the absence of a human father but the existence of a mother whose every ancestor had been free from

<sup>1</sup> 1 John, ii, 22.

the entail of Original Sin. The Roman Catholic Church has been logical in propping the doctrine of the Virgin Birth with the decree of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin; but it has been utterly illogical in stopping there and not continuing its expurgations back through her genealogy to Adam. To suppose that a virgin birth is necessary to Christ's divinity is to assume that divinity is a quality of matter. Yet just as we recognize the will as the centre of each human being and the essential nexus binding him to others, so we must see in Jesus his will as the essential and ultimate bond between him and God. "I seek," he said in announcing his ultimate purpose, "the will of the Father which hath sent me."<sup>1</sup> "I came to do the will of Him that sent me."<sup>2</sup> And this unity with God which was his unfailing support and his guide, is fenced in by those two utterances of his, the one as he looked forward to life, the other in the crisis of its ending: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"<sup>3</sup> and "Father, not my will but Thine be done!"<sup>4</sup> It is this absolute unity of will with God which we must regard as constituting the divinity of Christ; which therefore needs no materialistic prop such as is supposed to be furnished by a non-human mode of birth. If the relation between Jesus and God is akin to the closest relation between two human be-

<sup>1</sup> St. John, v, 30

<sup>3</sup> St. Luke, ii, 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vi, 38.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* xxii, 42.

ings, then indeed he becomes, as the early Christian seer called him, "the mediator of a new covenant,"<sup>1</sup> and God becomes gloriously apprehensible as we see "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup>

The danger has been pointed out of dwelling exclusively on the thought of the Divine transcendence — that it tends to remove God into inapprehensibility, till He becomes an unknowable  $x$ . There is a similar danger in dwelling exclusively on the thought of the Divine immanence. Faulty logic may assert, "If God is in all things, then all things are God." Distinctions vanish, among them the fundamental distinction between good and evil. It is not only east of Suez that the best is as the worst, but here all about us are those who proclaim that there is no such thing as sin, though there may be at times inconvenience. "Animals," says Walt Whitman, pointing to them as a model, "animals are not troubled about their sins." This gospel of Pantheism destroys all difference between higher and lower in human character, leaving only the urge of desire as the motive to be heeded. This makes oneself the only being to be considered, and — unless one is extraordinarily prudent — the self of the present moment only. Personality therefore decays. God of course has gone long before.

It is plain from what has been said that we must

<sup>1</sup> Heb., xii, 24.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor., iv, 6.

hold to both the transcendence of God and the immanence of God, and that, in order to avoid a blighting dualism, we must recognize these as not separate but as integral parts of each other. As emphasis, however, is laid on the one side or the other, different ethical standards result. Where God is chiefly regarded as transcendent, man's highest virtue is subordination. What God desires from man is obedience. If the Divine is the non-human, it is not man's development that will bring him near to the Divine but his contraction. Familiar examples of this meet us in every age—in the self-tortures of mediæval ascetics; in the stern Puritan endeavor to repress love to friends in order that love may be directed to God alone; in the Quaker emptying of self that God may enter; in the chorus of the revivalist,

O to be nothing, nothing!  
Only to lie at His feet  
A broken and empty vessel,  
For the Master's uses meet!

This idea reaches its logical development in Mohammedan countries, where the insane and idiotic are regarded as especially near to God and inspired. It has its prominent exponent in modern times, curiously enough, not in a theologian or philosopher, but in a social reformer, Rousseau, with his idealization of the primitive savage and the state of nature. We find it also in his follower, Wordsworth, whose interest is so largely in the untaught, in



“Peter Bell” and “The Idiot Boy,” and especially in children.

Heaven lies about us in our infancy.  
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
     Upon the growing Boy.  
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows  
     He sees it in his joy.

. . . . .

At length the man perceives it die away,  
 And fade into the light of common day.

Throughout the ancient world dreams were, for this reason, regarded as direct communications from God. Where the human will is wholly absent, it must be the Divine which prevails.

On the other hand, where the Divine immanence is emphasized, a broken and empty vessel is regarded as not so meet for the Master's use as a whole and full one. The more complete the man, the nearer he comes to God. His highest virtue is not obedience, but harmony of will with God. Let him develope all his powers. Let him will indomitably, let him think fearlessly, let him love passionately; so doing, he will be more in the image of God and therefore more pleasing to Him than one who crouches at His feet in self-abasement. “Son of man,” said the Divine voice to the prophet who had fallen low upon his face at the presence of the Lord, “Stand upon thy feet, and I will speak to thee.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ezek., ii, 1.

Throughout the ages this thought of the essential antagonism between human and Divine has affected the Church's view of the relations between man and God. In regard to that central doctrine of religion, the sovereignty of God, for example: if human and Divine are mutually exclusive, the will of God must be conceived as a command imposed on man from without. Obedience to this is rewarded and disobedience punished by arbitrary decrees, by conditions not in the nature of the case, which consequently might, if God so chose, be other than they are. But if humanity is one in kind with the Divine, God's will and man's will may be the same, in such inseparable union as we found exemplified in a closely married couple. The will of God then comes to the man not so much from without as from within, as the nature of things, as the voice of his own nature and will; or, rather, this points the way to a still further development and closer union, to that which, according to the early English version of the Psalms, the poet called, with a splendid double superlative, "the Most Highest." The breaking of this coincidence of wills is sin. *Μετάνοια*, a change of attitude, restores the union, though it does not necessarily save from the consequences of the sin. God and man are, however, again at one. This union, through the union of wills, becomes, when translated into theological language, justification by faith.

In like manner, if human and Divine differ in de-

gree rather than in kind, natural and supernatural must blend. Nature, the condition of things which is, is being constantly moulded into what ought to be. But oughtness is not in impersonal nature as such but is essentially personal. It is, so we say, above nature. Whenever then personality directs for its own ends the laws of nature, we might call this supernatural; but because we are so continually doing this, we reserve the term for the unusual, the apparently inexplicable instances of this agency, and call these alone supernatural. Yet this loose usage must not blind us to the fact that the supernatural is really the personal, and is therefore ultimately a part of nature, or rather nature is a part of it.

So too revelation may mean a body of truths once imparted from heaven, or a continually widening process of discovery. The late Dr. George F. Seymour, Bishop of Springfield, Illinois, states the former view clearly:

There are two realms of truth, revelation and science. The Church, as regards the subject-matter of revelation, is not a searcher after truth. She already holds the truth as God's gift to her, and it is her highest duty to guard it and hand it on, as St. Paul says, "as she received it." The Church, as God's accredited teacher of faith and morals, would contradict her own claim as speaking with authority if she were to allow for one moment that she is seeking after truth. I plead guilty to the charge that in the realm of revelation, the sphere of God's gift, I am not a seeker after truth. [And again:] For man there

are two realms of truth, revelation and science. God rules in the one absolutely; man is permitted to rule in the other. Revelation is God's direct gift to man. Science is man's acquisition. In the realm of revelation I am not a seeker after truth; in the realm of science I am a seeker after truth.<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Seymour undoubtedly never perceived that this is Manichæism; nor that such dualism is always atheistic, in that it hands over to man one province of life and thought without a God in it; nor that it is what churchmen of his school would call "rationalistic," since the boundaries of the two realms must certify themselves to the human intelligence or reason. If the human mind is competent to assign data to the one realm or the other, or if it is capable of apprehending the Divine assignment, why is not this capacity sufficient for determining the character of each datum as it is presented, that is, for knowing? To know that there are two realms is itself knowledge. To distinguish the Divine voice assigning its place to any datum involves the use of that very "private judgment" which the existence of a realm of revelation is supposed to supersede. It is as if, in order to save walking, we get a canal-boat to carry us, and then make our journey leading the towing horse.

Of course, it follows that thought, or reason, and faith are not antithetic but are parts of each other.

<sup>1</sup> *Danger Signals*, p. 18.

Reason carries the process of thinking as far as it can go, and faith then draws the conclusions, as yet invisible but probable beyond, and throws all her weight upon them. The one part of the process is as divinely appointed and approved as the other.

The sacred and the secular also therefore blend. These are convenient names for the moreness or lessness of divinity, or, perhaps I should say, for the greater or less apparentness of divinity, in a universe which is one. In what we call sacred, God stands out visible through the removal of common things; in the other case, He and His are so common as to be unnoticeable. And as neither side disqualifies the other, so the leading figures in each are different not in kind but only in function. The priest is not an abnormal or magically created man, but properly one with a special sense of God and the trained power of making Him apprehensible to humanity. His ordination as priest does not create but, like all true ecclesiastical functions, confirms and establishes authoritatively that which already exists. The baptismal office does not make one a child of God; it officially recognizes him as such. The wedding service does not make the marriage; that must have been begun previously and continued in the making through life. The burial service does not make a man dead; it only definitely declares him to be so. And thus the service of ordination, while through its inspiration it may awaken new powers, does not make

the priest different in kind from the man, but establishes him as a specialist in the visualization to humanity of God in some of His common aspects.

Or again, since creation must be regarded as the work of God, the view of human and Divine as anti-thetic lends itself to the idea that His activities, His word, His plans for humanity, are static, that is, that they took place some time in the past and then continued unchanged, or that they are tending to a goal which will some day be reached and will then become unchangeably fixed. Did the creation of the world take place ages ago at a certain point of time? or is evolution the account of a continual creation? Was inspiration a monopoly of men of former centuries? or does God speak to-day in the same ways in which He spoke to men of old? Is heaven a static condition to be reached after death, where there is no further change? or is the pulse of life eternally dynamic, with development ever on and on toward an ever-flying goal? If the human is the non-divine, God will undoubtedly take care that we shall not come too near Him; but if divinity is humanity raised to the *n*th power, then we may believe the words of Jesus to be authoritative, possible of accomplishment, and comforting: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."<sup>1</sup>

How all these dualistic difficulties vanish if we regard the universe as organic! An organism is a

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt., v, 48.



whole, each part of which is necessary to it and to the other parts. A particular stone in a basketful is not necessary; any other stone would do as well. But eye and hand and heart and brain are all necessary to the human body, and each implies the others. So every organic universal must have its particulars, which both give to it and receive from it completion. Two is a small number; but the universe would fall in ruins if two and two should cease to be four. The particular is as necessary to the universal as is the universal to the particular. So the human, far from being non-divine, is essential to the divine. As truly as man needs God in order to be his fully developed self, so truly does God need man for His own glory; nay more, He needs not only generic man but the individual me. He and I are so closely joined that neither could exist without the other. See this set forth in its extreme form with the logic of high poetic imagination:

Ich weiss und ohne mich Gott nicht ein Nun kann leben;  
 Weil ich so weicht, Er muss von Nicht den Geist aufgeben.  
 Ich bin so gross als Gott, Er ist als ich so klein.  
 Er kann nicht über mich, ich unter Ihm nicht seyn.

So sings the seventeenth-century mystic, Angelus Silesius:

Know that me I know God cannot live a minute;  
 Should I leave me, He too could not continue in it.  
 God is as small as I, I am as great as He.  
 He cannot above me, nor I beneath Him be.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Der Cherrubinischer Wandersmann*, I, 8. 10.

"But can the Infinite be subject to limitations?" Certainly, if these are self-limitations. Limitations imposed on me from without, I may rebel against as constituting subordination to another's will. But if I take these limitations and adopt them into myself, they become my own will, and so not hindrances to my development but means to it. I am, so far, *Causa mei*; I have used my finiteness to become, so far, infinite.

This great principle then, that the infinite does not exclude the finite but finds it essential to itself, enlightens all life and thought, from the flower in the crannied wall to the being and character of God. It reveals the Why of creation, the complex nature of God, the reasonableness and necessity of the Trinity, that union of human and Divine in Christ Jesus which prophets and creed-makers desired to see. It gives confidence to the prayer of humble access, and to him who without one reassuring glance builds on his Heavenly Father with unthinking certainty. If the infinite excludes the finite, we must be forever blind gropers in the dark toward a goal which forever eludes us. But if Divine and human are not antithetic, then we are, as the apostle triumphantly declares, "heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ." And to the possessors of such boundless wealth, what matters anything else!

## VII

### A COMPARISON OF THE SYNOPTIC, PAUL- INE, AND JOHANNINE CONCEPTIONS OF JESUS

WE often have a tendency, in the complex life of the present, to regret the apparently simpler life of the past; to long for the carefree irresponsibility of childhood, or for the unconventional habits of an earlier society, or for the glow and enthusiasm of our former Christian faith. The attempt at recall is, of course, always futile, and the picture of past conditions as we reconstruct it is almost always erroneous. The Golden Age is not behind but before. Similarly there is a tendency in the student of the life of Christ to regret the days when there was one authoritative portrait of Jesus, and when a harmony of the Gospels, arranging all, or nearly all, their incidents into a consistent whole, seemed entirely possible. But those days are, for the student of the New Testament, irrevocably gone. Here, as elsewhere, he will, if he is wise, recognize present conditions as steps in development and, with hopeful confidence, labor to discover the wealthier knowledge to which they lead.

That the New Testament contains not one portrait of Jesus but several, and that these differ from

one another in important respects, this is the starting point of our problem, which is to describe the three different views — for they all belong to three main types — and to consider the relation of these to one another. In doing so I shall take the Gospels and Epistles in the main as they stand, without attempting textual criticism, and shall use for convenience the names appended to them as those of the authors, without questioning their historicity.

In the Synoptic Gospels we find the first conception of Jesus; not the first in time but the first in christological development. It can be seen most characteristically in the Gospel of Mark. It is comparatively simple of thought, not analytic, not theologic. There is an atmosphere about it which is fresh, glad, young. We can see the blue lake sparkling in the morning sunshine, and the golden fields of Galilee, rich with lilies and vocal with birds. It is concerned with facts ungarnished, unrelated to any scheme of thought. The utterances of Jesus in it are significant and profound, but there is in them no touch of mystery; they say little about his nature or his relation to man or God. The bond between the disciples and their Master is one of personal devotion, in part an almost childish dependence, and in part the reverent loyalty of a religious enthusiast for his prophet. They turn to him for the solution of their practical questions: how to get a withheld inheritance or a desired office, how to pray, and —

most difficult of problems!—how to forgive. They were, and they remained, devout Jews; only to the current Judaism they added a recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, the observance of his precepts, and the expectation of his second coming to establish that Kingdom of God for which both Judaism and Christianity were waiting. During the lifetime of Jesus it all centred around the content of the message which he caught from the lips of his predecessor and with which he began his own work: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”<sup>1</sup> His disciples were occupied with the Lord’s parables and rules of conduct, with discovering surprising fulfilments of prophecy, and with discussing perplexing questions of apologetics which their new position forced upon them. Jesus had pointed to a spiritual essence in the Law underlying its ritual demands, and to a righteousness which exceeded that of the scribes and Pharisees; but their relation to the Law seems never to have been considered by his immediate disciples; it had to wait for its development in the next age by the great thinker of Christianity. As their faith grew after the crucifixion into primitive Christianity, the puzzle of their Master’s death almost absorbed their grief for it, while the expectation of the Parousia became more vivid and exigent. When and how it would occur, they knew not, only it would be soon, in their lifetime.

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt., iv, 17.

The Synoptic conception, we may say then, is of Jesus of Nazareth, a historic being, whom the authors or others had seen and walked with in Galilee or Judæa, whose words and deeds had become of central importance, a man of such attractiveness that loyalty to him became a dominant power in those who drew near to him. They felt in him the authority of one who knew God and man at first hand, and who dwelt with eternal things. Therefore he had originality; therefore he spoke boldly, and his word was with power. His confidence in his vision of God and in his success based on it were invincible; but together with this inflexibility of moral attitude there was a large loving-kindness which went out toward men, women, and little children, and all wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

I said that in the Second Gospel there is no touch of mystery; but that is not the case with the other two Synoptic Gospels. While they share in the main the comparatively incomplex view of Jesus, touches of mystery cannot be kept from creeping in. Apart from the mystery connected with a few of the miracles attributed to him, there are one or two utterances ascribed to him by Matthew and Luke which are widely different in tone from those practical directions for conduct and those deepened interpretations of duty and God which form the greater part of his recorded discourses. Notably there is Matthew xi,



27, repeated in Luke x, 22: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him." That might have come not from the Synoptists but from the Fourth Gospel, its tone is so like that profound underlying keynote of the Johannine writings, "I and my Father are one." In its distinct expression of the relation of Jesus to God this utterance stands almost alone in the Synoptists; though we hear a somewhat similar note in the words ascribed by Matthew to Jesus in his final charge to his disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,"<sup>1</sup> and again in the passages, different in tone but tending in this direction, in which Jesus is described as the final judge of the world. In the picture of Jesus drawn by the Synoptists, says Professor J. H. Ropes, "a certain mystery is an integral and essential element, which cannot be separated out as having been added by a legendary accretion."<sup>2</sup>

There is another possible indication that this tone of mysticism was in the original words of Jesus and was not added by later writings. The Fourth Gospel declares that Jesus said, "I am the Way."<sup>3</sup> If that was in fact an utterance of his, it would be an exhibition of the spiritual Christ rather than the historic

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt., xxviii, 18.

<sup>2</sup> *The Apostolic Age*, p. 237.

<sup>3</sup> St. John, xiv, 6.

Jesus. Now this phrase, "the Way," came to be, in the apostolic age, according to the Book of the Acts, the common term for the Christian movement. Saul went to Damascus to see if he could arrest any belonging to "the Way."<sup>1</sup> "The Way" was opposed by the Jews in Ephesus.<sup>2</sup> The procurator Felix was well posted with regard to "the Way."<sup>3</sup> We find then the word with this signification in common use about the middle of the first century; but this usage seems to have disappeared, for we do not meet it afterward, and a half-century later "the Way" has come to be applied to Jesus himself as being the means of communication between man and God. This appears contrary to the regular order of logical development. We should expect that the use of the phrase as a name for Jesus would come first, and then it might naturally be applied to the movement inaugurated by him. The reverse process seems illogical — to take the name of a society and apply it to its founder. But if Jesus in fact uttered the words, the usage would be explained; the name which he gave himself came naturally to be used as that of his society. Either the Johannine usage was the first and that of the Acts second, which would be presumable, or that of the Acts was first and the Johannine second, which would be strange. It seems likely, therefore, that the Fourth Gospel is correct in attributing these words, "I am the Way," with their transcendent tone, to Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> Acts, ix, 2.<sup>2</sup> Acts, xix, 9.<sup>3</sup> Acts, xxiv, 22.

This Synoptic conception of Jesus, simple though with threads of mystery interwoven in it, could not be adequate to meet the demands of inquiring intelligence or an expanding world. It must itself expand; and this, Jesus said, could be only through his departure. Then his followers would be compelled to think and act for themselves on the foundation he had built for them.

Shortly after his death there came an event, according to the Book of the Acts, which definitely changed the relation of the disciples to their Master. On the Day of Pentecost, somehow, in some way, they were seized with the conviction that he was not dead but alive. For some of them, no doubt, this implied merely the transference in imagination of his former material existence to a different, a heavenly sphere; but to those of deeper insight it was the discovery of what is meant by spiritual presence. Loving souls of all time have felt that, when their minds are filled with a dear one who has gone, when they are living in the ways in which he lived, thinking his thoughts, holding his ideas, pressing heart to heart, they are thus communing not merely with the memory of him but with his spiritual presence; not with him as a ghostly *revenant*, but with those currents of his spiritual being which were of the essence of his true life. While this is not his corporeal presence, it is as truly, even more truly, his real presence. This conviction came to the disciples of

Jesus on the Day of Pentecost, and it changed the sphere in which their Master was present with them from an external to an internal one. It formed thus the transition from the Synoptic conception of Jesus to that which was at the basis of the Pauline and Johannine conceptions.

Yet Paul seems to have received his conception of Jesus, not from that of the Synoptists but in another way. He has few sentences showing an influence of Jesus' language as reported in the Gospels. He says that he had formerly known Christ "after the flesh." It is possible for this to mean merely that he had seen Jesus and was acquainted with his history. This was probably the case; for it would have been strange for one who had been a student in Jerusalem, as Paul was at the time when the authorities were in conflict with Jesus, not to have seen him and known of the affair. But the phrase probably means that his conception of Jesus had been a superficial one, occupied with historic events and unaware of their profound bearing on the relations between man and God. Certainly he shows in his Epistles little interest in the history of Jesus before his redemptive death.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The only events previous to the Last Supper to which he refers are the Davidic descent of Jesus (Rom., i, 3; ix, 5; xv, 12); his lowly condition and poverty (Phil., ii, 7; 2 Cor., viii, 9); his unselfishness (Rom., xv, 3); possibly a part of the first charge to the twelve apostles (cf. 1 Cor., ix, 14 with Matt., x, 10); if he is correctly reported by the author of the Acts, the preparatory ministry of John (Acts, xiii, 24, 25); and one of Jesus' remarks not elsewhere preserved (Acts, xx, 35).

He insists strongly that he borrowed his idea of Jesus from no one, but that it was wholly original: "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man nor was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup> It must, of course, have had some basis in historic events, but it seems to have diverged from the Synoptic contemplation of the ministrations of Jesus to men and to have followed rather the thought of his relation to God in redemption.

It is that word "redemption" which is the key to Paul's theology. When we try to trace the steps of his thought and assess them as rational, we are confronted by ideas which seem irrational and un-Christian. This is partly because he had still in mind conceptions belonging to Saul the Jew, which Paul the Christian had not outgrown, and partly because we are enjoying the fruitage of larger Christian conceptions, of which he was sowing the seeds unawares; but his view of the process of redemption, however explained, we shall find based on the great fundamental laws of man's spiritual life, which are as true for us as they have been in all time.

The most earnest endeavor of Saul, the young Pharisee, was to be right — "justified" he called it — in the sight of God, and this of course could be only by keeping the Law. The more he tried, how-

<sup>1</sup> Gal., i, 11, 12, 17, 22.

ever, the more impossible it became. Suddenly it flashed upon him, What if this infinity of minute demands did not exist? What if they were to be met in another way? What if they had been met? If they had, then he was free from them. In the same instantaneous flash came the conviction that Jesus, whom he had fought against, was the Messiah. But he, the anointed one, God's own Son, was of course above the Law and free from it, though he had gained this freedom while experiencing human conditions. Paul puts in a single word the key to Christ's exaltation and hangs it up on a "Wherefore"; for after enumerating the lowly conditions through which Jesus triumphantly passed he says, "*Wherefore* God hath highly exalted him." <sup>1</sup> Now if he, Paul, should pass through the same experiences, he would attain the same blessed result; and this, if Jesus became his Master, he could do, for then, following the steps of his Lord with loving devotion, he would become one with him; he too would be baptized with consecration to God, he would die to sin, and this would mean that he too would ascend and rise into newness of life. Becoming thus joined to Christ by passing through his experiences, he would share his fortunes hereafter. Again he puts his keynote into a word or two. If God commended his love to us through the death of Christ while we were sinners, much more shall we be saved now that we are justified; if the

<sup>1</sup> Phil., ii, 9.



death of Christ brought us near to God, much more shall we be saved by his life.<sup>1</sup> There is many a trembling soul that has laid itself down with Paul in confidence upon his "much more."

There was, however, another side to the transaction. How could he, how could even Christ, obtain freedom from demands which were just? How was it possible for God to lay aside these demands? The debt incurred through sin must be paid. How could God with justice give free way to His forgiving love? But again Paul's answer came: it was through the death of Christ. He nowhere traces completely the connection which he finds between Christ's death and the possibility of God's forgiveness, but he assumes and reiterates it. The Cross was an offering on the part of Christ, on the part of humanity which he represented, which made free forgiveness possible.

Here many a thoughtful Christian has stumbled and parted company with Paul; for the conception which seems to underlie the apostle's thought, of sin as a debt for which a vindictive God must exact the uttermost farthing of payment, is abhorrent to him and contrary, as he must believe, to the conception of God as set forth by Jesus Christ. Viewing Paul's thought thus, we may see in it only a remnant of Judaism and even of paganism — a savage deity refusing to be appeased except by a bloody sacrifice. Yet we may pierce deeper, and, without asserting

<sup>1</sup> Rom., v, 8, 9.

that our explanation is precisely that of Paul, we may trace the law of redemption until it leads us to the Cross of Christ; for redemption inevitably involves suffering, and it was foreseen long before the Christian era that suffering for righteousness has a saving power not only for the sufferer but for all who come within the range of its influence. The Prophet of the Exile had declared of the servant of the Lord, "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."<sup>1</sup> Of the Maccabean martyrs it was said, "They came, as it were, a vicarious expiation for the sins of the nation, and through the blood of those godly men and their atoning death Divine Providence saved afflicted Israel."<sup>2</sup> We do not have to turn to the Scriptures for evidence of the vicarious and redeeming power of suffering, for it is intelligible to everyone who has tried to rescue from sin one whom he loves. He has found himself plunged by love into all the fortunes of the sinner; himself, though innocent, suffering punishment with and for the guilty. He knows that this fellow-suffering constitutes the most potent appeal and the ultimate agency for the salvation of the sinner, and he gladly pours out his life-force, his life-blood, as a ransom.

The power which uplifts the world is will for righteousness. This may be viewed as a great fund

<sup>1</sup> Isa., liii, 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> IV Macc., 17, 22.

supplied not only by the will of God but by contributions from the wills of individual men. The more of such contributions there are, the greater is the power in the hands of God available for the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness. So too, we may believe, there is a fund of suffering necessary for the redemption of the world. Every act of suffering in a good cause, insignificant though it may seem, is not lost, but goes to swell that fund, making it more potent for the world's redemption. The existence of such a fund is not demonstrable but belief in it is an imperative demand of the soul, and evidence for it is eagerly and hopefully sought by every sufferer, who would endure with proud satisfaction, if only his agonized question could be convincingly answered, "What profit is there in my blood when I go down into the pit?"<sup>1</sup>

The conception of such a fund, potent for redemption, may throw light on the position Paul assigns to the Cross of Christ as being at once the means of drawing the sinner to God and therefore of making it possible for God to come close to the sinner. Salvation, to be complete, must secure deliverance from the guilt of sin and from its power. The guilt of sin, its opposition to God's law, ceases when the opposition ceases, though even then the punitive consequences of past sins may remain. The power of sin is broken and the man kept from falling when he is

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 30, 9.

uplifted through shame and love into fellowship with the redeeming agency. Being cleansed thus from the guilt of sin and from its power, he becomes a one with God.

We are inclined to suppose that the work of Christ in establishing an atonement has its effect wholly upon men. What need is there, we ask, of propitiating God, of urging him to be willing to pardon and receive sinners? He is more than willing already. It is not God who needs to be reconciled to men, but men to be reconciled to God; the work of Christ can have effect upon men only. Yet rather, we should say, upon men primarily; for while it is true that God stands ready to welcome and receive every sinner who repents, yet He is kept at a distance by an unrepentant and opposing will, and is able then to impart not so much Himself as certain of His benefactions only — such sun and rain as just and unjust can receive alike. When, however, the sinner's attitude is changed, by that fact God's attitude too is changed, and it becomes possible for His love to flow out unhampered by human barriers. Christ's work then, while having its primary result in bringing men to God, has as a secondary result the bringing of God to men. What it changes is not the nature of God's heart, but the conditions under which alone that loving heart can manifest its nature; for no righteous will can act or feel toward an evil will in the same way as toward a good one. There is

more than a figure of speech in Paul's term "wrath," taken from the Old Testament, for the attitude of God to sin. Until one repents, forgiveness must be incomplete. It is only when forgiveness meets repentance that it can have its longed-for completeness; only then that the sinner can be free from "wrath" and be — in Paul's phraseology — "justified"; and such change is possible only through that firm hold on eternal realities which Paul calls faith; through the recognition of Jesus as the representative of God and a passionate loyalty to Christ, who now becomes the motive power of the soul. The transformation of the believer's moral nature alters not only the status of the soul in its relation to God but the relation of God to the soul.

This may help to an understanding of those phrases which are likely to give offence to modern readers of the Pauline theology, phrases such as "propitiation," Christ a "sacrifice to God," "being made a curse for us," "redemption through the blood of Christ." Such expressions seem to point not only to a change in the attitude of God to men, but to unworthy motives for the change. Undoubtedly such phrases take their form more naturally in a mind brought up, as was that of Paul, in a system in which bloody sacrifices formed an essential part; but these expressions are only the casual clothing of his profound thought, and even with him such figures of speech are much less frequent than we are

inclined to suppose, while his main emphasis is on the effect of Christ's redeeming work upon men.

The Renaissance of the fifteenth century was grounded upon the assertion of the rights and the worth of the individual. Paul may be said to be in this respect the prophet of the Renaissance; for in his view religion is not involved with membership in a nation, much less in a church, nor in case of the individual is it a product of heredity and education, but it is essentially a response of the soul to God. Luther called attention to the pronouns of the Bible. It is not "God will save men" but "I will save thee." This feeling of a direct and intimate relation between God and man turns Paul's gaze within and fixes his eyes upon the processes of development going on in the individual soul; and it is this that colors his use of the term "Christ." I said that he shows little interest in the events of the life of Jesus; but his pages are studded with the name "Christ"; it flashes upon us, directly or indirectly, from almost every thought. It has passed with him, however, from a title of Jesus of Nazareth to a designation of the ideal man, the embodiment of all that is best in humanity, the expression of the possibilities of the soul of the individual and of the race. "Christ" stands with him for the human side of God and therefore for the divine side of humanity. He uses the phrase "Son of God" infrequently and "Son of Man" not at all; but they are both combined for



him in the word "Christ." For example, he says that God's dear Son is "the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature."<sup>1</sup> Again, he longs to attain the resurrection of the dead, which, he says, he has not already attained — a remark which would be superfluous if resurrection meant to him a reëndowment of life in a future state. But he will attain this, or, as he more fully defines it, he will become perfect, if he may "know Christ"; not merely the facts of his sufferings, death, and resurrection, which he already knew, but the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings and the likeness of his death. If these same processes take place in him — and of course he thinks of himself as a type of every man — they will constitute in him the ideal for which he is apprehended. He will then be "in Christ."<sup>2</sup>

The Christian idea of God is adjusted to two foci, His transcendence and His immanence, and it fails in reality and power wherever either of these is feeble. Paul carries on this thought and points out as a corollary of this spiritual ellipse the transcendence of Christ and his immanence in the soul; for in saying that Paul had little interest in Jesus as a historic being but that "Christ" was to him the expression of the divine side of humanity and of the human side of God, I am by no means implying that he was not also to Paul a real person of history.

<sup>1</sup> Col., i, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Phil., iii, 10-13.

Passages occur in which the word "Christ" has a direct reference to events in Jesus' life. Now one and now another of the great conceptions which go to make up his idea of Christ is prominent and gives accent to the special thought in hand. Christ is made of the seed of David and is also the shining image of God.<sup>1</sup> Now it is that Jesus who was the complete embodiment of God under human conditions; now it is the spiritual processes in himself, in every man, which produce and constitute the lofty ideal of humanity; now Christ is external to the soul, the giver of all its true life; now he is within the soul, its very life and essence. From one to another of these great conceptions his expression hurries, as it is now this, now that aspect that he has mainly in view, though he never quite forgets any one of them. They tangle his thought into inextricable sentences. They reveal to us conceptions which are widely illuminative, those ordinary-seeming phrases — "in Christ," "to whom coming," "Christ in you" — conceptions as to the inclusiveness of personality. The mystery of the mingling of human and divine in the soul and in the race so overcomes him that he bursts out into poetry and a torrent of prepositions: "For of him and through him and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."<sup>2</sup>

When we turn to the Johannine conception of Christ, the date of the Fourth Gospel becomes of

<sup>1</sup> Col., i, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Rom., xi, 36.

interest. It is not, however, necessary for us to attempt to fix this exactly, for what we desire to consider is not the genuineness of the Gospel, but the authenticity of its conception of Christ and the relation of this to the Synoptic and Pauline conceptions. It is enough for this purpose to have permission from scholars to place the date of the Gospel a half-century at least after the last of the Pauline Epistles. During this time the Church had been obeying the prophet's injunction to lengthen its cords and strengthen its stakes, and consequently, as the prophet had foretold, it was inheriting the Gentiles. Especially had it strengthened its hold on Asia Minor. The churches which Paul had founded there in his journeyings had been keeping alive the light of his gospel, so that a quarter or a half-century after their foundation a writer could speak of them as seven golden candlesticks, which were the dwelling-place of Christ.<sup>1</sup> It is a tradition which has strong evidence for its genuineness that the apostle John lived until near the end of the century in Ephesus, and that he was the author of the Fourth Gospel and of the First Epistle of John. Whether this was the case or not, it is unquestionable that there lived in that part of the world in the last quarter of the century a writer of spiritual insight and imagination who had himself known Jesus, or had been well acquainted with one who had such

<sup>1</sup> Rev., i, 12, 13.

intimate personal knowledge, who also was indebted to Paul's gospel, as he came on it in Asia Minor, but whose view of Christ was a direct development neither of that of Paul nor of that of the Synoptists. We may for convenience refer to this writer as "John," without assuming that he was in fact the apostle.

The Synoptic conception of Christ has already been described as simple of thought, not analytic, not theologic. On the other hand, the tone of the Fourth Gospel is mature, meditative, mystical. The life it reflects is subtle and complex. It is full of theology. Its gaze is dreamy, far distant, so far that on its horizon the line between earth and heaven is indistinguishable. The Synoptic Gospels are full of brief, epigrammatic sayings of Jesus and of stories of his illustrating the Kingdom of God. The Fourth Gospel, with one possible exception, contains no parable, and the discourses of Jesus in it are involved in style and are occupied with setting forth the relations of men to him and his relations to his Father. The Synoptists represent the bread and wine of the Last Supper as symbolic of Jesus' body and blood. The Fourth Gospel knows nothing of this sacrament. The Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel are not merely different, but are in some respects contradictory. In the latter there is no development in the history of Jesus' public ministry. His Messiahship is at once announced by John the Baptist,

recognized by the disciples, and exhibited to the multitudes assembled at Jerusalem. On the other hand, in the Synoptic Gospels his Messianic character is unfolded only gradually. Those who discover it are bidden to keep it concealed. His closest disciples are slow to recognize it, and it is openly announced only at the close of his career. Again, the character of the life is different which the followers of Christ will share through their connection with him. In the first three Gospels it is a blessed existence in some distant sphere in the future. The present is only preparatory to it, for this life will pass away before the Kingdom of Heaven will begin. In the Fourth Gospel the reward of the followers of Christ is eternal life; and this is conceived not so much as waiting upon a future day as a matter of here and now, for it consists in union of spirit with him. The Christ of Luke places the resurrection and the moral assessment of life far distant at the world's end.<sup>1</sup> John makes the Christ repudiate this view and declare that he is himself the resurrection and the life, and that belief in him carries life with it immediately.<sup>2</sup>

Such differences and contrarieties must spring from a difference of view in the writers. They must have regarded Jesus differently and have had different aims in writing. In the case of the author of the Fourth Gospel, we cannot but suspect before we reach the end of his book that he has a special pur-

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke, xx, 35.

<sup>2</sup> St. John, xi, 25.

pose; and when we reach the last chapter but one, we find it definitely stated: "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." <sup>1</sup> The author's work then is not a biography of Jesus, not a history of the events of his time, but aims to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God, and this not so much for intellectual conviction as for spiritual edification. He alone speculates on the relation of Jesus to the Almighty Creator. He alone sees in him the representative in human conditions of a side of God's nature which forever existed. The Synoptists exhibit Jesus as preaching the truth; the fourth evangelist regards Jesus as being himself the Truth, the eternal Thought and Reasonableness of God. It is not merely the case with him, as with the others, that following Christ's precepts will result in a life which exemplifies that of Jesus; but with him Jesus is life itself, all that gives wealth, joy, and worth to existence. Christ is not only an objective, historic being, who once lived and died, but he is the subjective principle of life within the soul. The first and third evangelists give traditions of the birth of Jesus, though even they ignore them afterward and sometimes contradict them. The second evangelist hears the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the voice of John the Baptist. But the fourth evan-

<sup>1</sup> St. John, xx, 31.



gelist could have nothing to do with traditions of the birth of Jesus, for to him the history of Christ went back through the ages and began in the beginning with God.

When we have apprehended how widely different is the portrait of Jesus which is given in the Fourth Gospel from that of the other three, we hastily turn back and ask, "Is it authentic? How far does it represent the real Jesus of Nazareth, or how far is it owing to the peculiarities of the author, whoever he was?" The brief, pithy sentences and vital metaphors which the earlier Gospels ascribe to Jesus all bear one sharp and individual stamp; but these are widely different from the close involutions of argument of the Fourth Gospel and the intricacies of metaphysical thought underlying them. What is true of historic data and of style may be also true in some respects of the underlying theology, for it is partly conditioned by them. Was this theologic view of Jesus a peculiarity of the author, or was Jesus in reality the mystic being here portrayed? This special tinge which the Fourth Gospel has throughout — is this the artist's coloring, or is the portrait trustworthy?

Portrait — that is the word we must keep in mind in considering this Gospel. It is not a photograph of Jesus. How do a portrait and a photograph differ? The one gives the fact of the moment and from one point of view. Place yourself at the camera and put

your sitter in position, and the photograph is precisely what you see. It is the scientifically correct record of these particular conditions; but as a complete report of a man it may be gravely inaccurate. "He never takes well," we say of this or that person, "his face has so much expression." Where a subject is complex the photograph, by recording only one aspect, may convey an absolutely false impression; but the portrait-painter endeavors to show the full, the real man. The greatness of a Rembrandt or a Watts portrait does not lie in the fact that it tells us of what color the subject's eyes were or what kind of a coat he wore. We care little whether the artist was historically accurate in these details or not; but we stand in amazement at seeing a human soul gazing at us from the canvas — a soul calm or frivolous, humorous, vain, or profound. It is the man himself that we see, not his clothes, not his appearance at one time or under special circumstances, but the composite, complete man. Before the artist can create his likeness he must create *him*. The sitter presents himself before the artist's judgment seat, and the artist gives sentence upon him with every stroke of his brush: "Your character is thus and so. You are a coward here, a hero there. Thus I strip off all accidentals of time and circumstance, and behold, your real self stands revealed." It must require much confidence to have one's portrait painted by a great artist.

It is such a likeness of Christ that the Fourth Gospel gives us. Mark, with his loving eye for details, records this and that circumstance which we welcome as furnishing the fact-basis for our conception of Jesus; and then comes John, and upon this background he paints so that we behold the light of the knowledge of the glory of God beaming forth in the face of Jesus Christ. It is a presumption in behalf of the accuracy of his portrait, that it is not a summary of facts but the impression which Christ made as a whole upon an artist of constructive imagination and profound spiritual insight. If we had possessed no more than the first three Gospels, we should have had a wonderful Jesus, an example and an inspiration; but he would have been a historic being only; we should have had no warrant for identifying him with the divine life of our souls, dwelling with us and abiding in us. The Christ of the Fourth Gospel, however, is the connecting link between the outward and the inward, between the historic and the spiritual. He is the representative in bodily conditions, in terms of time and space, of that human side which existed forever in the nature of God. The life of Jesus was in time; but the divine Sonship, the existence in God of a human side, was independent of time and humanity, being eternal. This was authentically exhibited in Jesus of Nazareth. Not that he is himself the Almighty; for neither in this Gospel nor elsewhere in the New

Testament is it asserted as a theological proposition that Jesus is God. The Christians of the first two centuries considered that they might call Jesus *κύριος*, and let their feelings go out toward him as toward God, without being driven to justify their feeling by making the advance in thought regarded as necessary by the Christians of the fourth century. To the Christians of the apostolic age Jesus was the authentic representative of God. If God had lived, a man on earth, he would have done just as Jesus did. Jesus showed thought and love and goodness as existing forever in the bosom of the Father and constituting in Him the ground of connection with humanity; and, on the other hand, he showed this same goodness and thought and love as the true nature of men and constituting in them the ground of union with God. He brought God down to men, and raised men up to God; and as he is God's representative, so whatsoever things are true, pure, just, lovely, these are his representatives. The soul of the world, all the calls to noble desire, all that makes life worth living, this is the presence of the spirit of Christ. It is such a conception of Jesus as this that is the characteristic gift to us of the Fourth Gospel.

When we compare the Johannine conception of Jesus with that of Paul we note two striking resemblances: the preëxistence of Christ is strongly emphasized by both, and the real and actual oneness

of the believer with Christ. In the Synoptists these conceptions are lacking, though there are a few utterances ascribed to Jesus which may be regarded as germs of the thought which later developed into the idea that the spiritual life of the believer is the life of God in the soul.<sup>1</sup> The Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle of John undoubtedly originated in Asia and have an Asiatic background. It seems probable, however, that this background was not a direct borrowing or development of Paul's theology, but was in part an original and parallel system of thought and in part an indirect inheritance of Paulinism; for while the two systems contain, as has been pointed out, striking resemblances, they also contain marked differences.

For example, Paul's chief interest is in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and in these as securing the redemption of the believer through his oneness with Christ; but to John the death of Christ is not so much a ransom from sin as a manifestation of the love of God drawing men to Him. That escape from under the power of sin which filled so large a part in Paul's thought has with John passed over into the conviction that to know God is the highest good. What redemption was in Paul's system, revelation is in John's. For Paul, at least in his middle period of thought, Christ's resurrection consisted in his dying unto the flesh and rising again in the spirit; John re-

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt., x, 20; xiii, 11; xvi, 17; xix, 26, and parallel passages.

gards Christ's resurrection as having been in the flesh, for after it the prints of his wounds still remain and he eats with his disciples. Strangely enough, however, the resurrection of the believer is for John a spiritual one, or rather it is not so much a resurrection as the possession of eternal life here and now. Belief in Christ, the knowledge of God, these constitute life eternal and therefore carry the believer through death. The saving power which Paul ascribed to Jesus in his exalted post-resurrection existence only, John gives to Jesus during his lifetime on earth; and this is not a mere difference with regard to time, but marks a different view as to the relation of the Christian to his Lord. Such an insistence on the life-giving power of the historic Jesus could hardly have come except from one who had had personal knowledge of him or had learned of him from one of his own disciples. In spite of the victory which Paul had gained in combating the Jewish view that religion consisted in doing the works of the Law, there still remained stamped on Christianity a certain legal form; and this appears in John's assertion that the Christian life consists in keeping Christ's commandments. This is somewhat inconsistent with his profound conviction that it is the indwelling Christ who makes life divine. Both these stages are of course needful to the Christian; but while the former is, as it were, the body of Christianity, the latter is the very spirit and soul of it.



In both the Pauline and the Johannine conceptions of Christ I have pointed out a certain mystical element — the immanence of Christ in the soul and the dwelling of the soul in him. And we have seen that while this is absent from the Synoptic conception in any direct form, there are utterances there ascribed to Jesus which may be regarded as the germs of this profound thought; but it is not upon these only that the evidence rests for the authenticity of the later conception, for the picture we gain of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John is in its most important elements similar to that which we have in the Synoptic Gospels. That he was to both John and Paul a spiritual being renders it none the less true that he was to them, as to the Synoptists, a historic being; and the appearance in different minds in widely different localities of this mystical element in the figure of Christ makes it probable that it had a basis in Jesus himself. The fact that John does not hesitate to assign to Jesus human limitations and weaknesses shows that in ascribing divinity to him he must have had authoritative warrant in his words or character; for otherwise he would not have ventured to include in his portrait features which might seem inconsistent with its main aim.<sup>1</sup> In the fragments of a lost Gospel discovered at Oxyrhynchus in 1897 this mystical tone is found in the words

<sup>1</sup> Cf. St. John, iv, 6; v, 19, 30; vii, 1; xi, 33 ff.; xii, 27, 49.

Jesus is said to have uttered: "Jesus saith, Wherever there are two they are not without God, and wherever there is one alone, I say, I am with him. Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I." The fact that this tone is found in localities so widely separated as Egypt and Ephesus makes it probable that it was not invented by post-apostolic writers, but was part of the original tradition and had a historic basis.

Belief in God depends more upon moral than upon intellectual grounds. It is founded upon the insistence of the soul that the highest intellectual and moral ideal shall be real. The cogency of this demand will therefore be in proportion to the urgency with which the moral pressure is felt; belief therefore in the authenticity of the idea of Christ as immanent in the soul, which underlies both the Pauline and the Johannine conceptions, will depend largely upon whether such an idea is demanded by one's spiritual nature. To some the figure which appears in the Synoptists may be a sufficient explanation of the person of Christ and of the way of their own approach to God. Others, to whom it seems that there must of necessity have been from all eternity a human side in God, that this must of necessity have become at some time embodied as completely as is possible under human conditions, that this ideal must stand in vital connection with the life of their

own souls to-day — such will recognize in the portrait of Christ drawn by Paul and John with the purpose of presenting to the soul its Master, features intrinsically probable as those of the historic Jesus of Nazareth and essential to the Saviour of the world.









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